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## Small-Space Gardening

### **Spring Clean**

Build Your No-Chemical,  
Clean-Anything Arsenal

### **3 Plastics to Avoid**

For a Healthier Home

### **Water Recycling 101**

Put Wastewater to Work

### **Small Homes in Our Future**

Some Assembly Required

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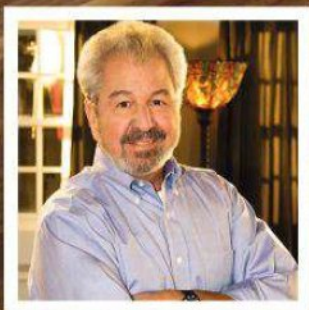




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Circle #9; see card pg 81

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## Sow Easy

**I'M A GARDENING MOOCH.** I take complete advantage of other people's gardening efforts without raising so much as a finger to help. My husband's very green thumbs keep our townhouse bursting with houseplants. Though I love being surrounded by greenery, I'm barely capable of keeping them alive when he's out of town. In spring and summer, I take great pride in the fact that our little balcony overflows with veggies and herbs. I point it out to my neighbors while lying by the pool—"Yep, that's ours with all the pepper plants." And what contribution do I make to this abundant small-space garden? I accompany James on his annual spring trip to the local nursery, where I say helpful things like, "Yeah, grow basil!"

I mooch at work, too. I was thrilled when, a couple of years ago, my colleagues at *Mother Earth News* and *GRIT* decided to start a community garden in front of our office. Almost every lunch hour during the spring and summer, a team of dedicated gardeners gets out there and plants and tends a plethora of herbs and veggies, which they kindly share with the rest of us when they've (yet again) grown too much for themselves and their families to eat. Several people in our office raise chickens, so I buy inexpensive, fresh local eggs

here at work, too. And I'm a member of an area community-supported agriculture (CSA) group, so I eat fresh-from-the-farm produce. Again, no labor required.

Our lives are greatly improved by gardens and gardeners, even if we don't garden ourselves. This, our 12th annual Garden issue, is jam-packed with some of the coolest gardens and most fascinating gardeners we could find—a clever rainwater-gulping food garden in downtown Kansas City; an organic goat-milk soap farm in Colorado; and a California winemaker who is carrying on his family's centuries-old organic traditions. We're also giving you tips for creating a garden on your balcony or patio, raising chickens in your backyard, and using your iPod or iPad to find new sources of local food. For those of you who do all the hard work, we hope you find inspiration here. For you freeloaders like me, we hope you're inspired to support your local gardeners and farmers.

During this season of growth, we're also in a period of change here at *Natural Home*. Founding editor-in-chief Robyn Griggs Lawrence has moved on to a new position within our publishing company (she'll still be writing and blogging for *Natural Home*—follow her at [naturalhome.com/natural-home-living](http://naturalhome.com/natural-home-living)). I'm honored to be following in the footsteps of such a tasteful, warm and inspirational woman. We're planning to continue bringing you all the content you've told us fits your life: efficient houses, simple living, modern design, chic hand-me-downs, antique treasures, community renovation, local food, human connection, vegetable gardens, ornamental plants and more. Check in with us via e-mail, Facebook or phone if you've got something to share. Or join our editorial advisory group: [naturalhomemagazine.com/editorial-advisory-group](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/editorial-advisory-group).

I may not grow my own plants, but I'm eager to grow this magazine with your help. I hope you're in the mood to help me plant some seeds.

Jessica Kellner, Editor

## Three Things I Love This Issue



Transforming a water-guzzling yard into a native wildlife habitat (Putting Up a Good Front Yard, page 26)



Pinot noir that's produced well, from vineyard to vessel (Reclaiming the Winery, page 60)



An island getaway that offers a glimpse of the Caribbean cruise-shippers may never see (Jamaican Hideaway, page 85)

**Want to chat?**  
E-mail me suggestions, questions or story ideas! [jkellner@naturalhomemagazine.com](mailto:jkellner@naturalhomemagazine.com). We'd love your input on upcoming stories. Join our online advisory group at [naturalhomemagazine.com/editorial-advisory-group](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/editorial-advisory-group)



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"If everybody would take care of their own home's efficiency, that's really all it would take for the whole system to be more efficient. I love to show people that."

— GREG MILLER, PAGE 40

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# natural HOME

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Circle #15; see card pg 81



## Grow Your Own Food!

*I want to grow my own food, but I don't have much space, and I'm not sure which vegetables and herbs are most productive.*

You can eat better and save money with homegrown food no matter how much space you have. Get simple tips and helpful hints at [NATURALHOMEMAGAZINE.COM/GROW-YOUR-OWN-FOOD](http://NATURALHOMEMAGAZINE.COM/GROW-YOUR-OWN-FOOD).



### FOLLOW ROBYN

Editor-at-large Robyn Griggs Lawrence is writing about all her favorite things—tiny homes, gorgeous décor, eco-travel and more. Follow her at [naturalhomemagazine.com/natural-home-living](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/natural-home-living).

### SPRING BOUNTY

Make the most of your harvest with our favorite spring recipes. [naturalhomemagazine.com/spring-recipes](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/spring-recipes)

### CONTROL CLUTTER

Spring is the perfect time to ditch clutter and create a serene home. [naturalhomemagazine.com/clear-clutter](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/clear-clutter)

### WEDDING BELLS

Planning a wedding? Find resources for sustainable bridesmaid dresses, handmade tabletop decorations and more at [naturalhomemagazine.com/green-wedding](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/green-wedding).

### REVVED-UP RECYCLING

If you want to recycle more trash, but aren't sure where to send oddball items, use our handy recycle-anything guide. [naturalhomemagazine.com/recycling-guide](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/recycling-guide)

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### VOICE YOUR OPINION

Share your love for decorating, gardening experiences or favorite recipes with other readers! Sign up to be a *Natural Home* blogger. E-mail [editor@naturalhomemagazine.com](mailto:editor@naturalhomemagazine.com) to get started.



# Thanks, a Bushel

I purchased the November/December 2010 issue in an airport and found it interesting. However, in the article about decorating in Washington, D.C. ("*Natural Home Goes to Washington*"), the writer stated that a bushel of wheat was pictured. In fact, the picture showed a sheaf of wheat. A bushel of wheat is an amount of kernels after the grain is harvested. Just wanted you to know.

— PAT HODGE, MOCCASIN, MONTANA

Thanks for the correction, Pat. You are absolutely correct. We regret the error.



Sheaves of wheat starred in the classic American holiday décor our sister publication, *Mother Earth News*, installed last November in the presidential guest house in Washington, D.C.

## Share Your Perspective

I have been a subscriber for a few years and wholeheartedly agree with your philosophy. However, sometimes my health conflicts with the way I wish I could live my life.

For example, I am allergic to pollens and dust. Though I live in sunny Florida, I must keep my windows and doors closed year-round and use my HVAC all the time, as well as the AC in my car. The much-touted cross ventilation/natural air conditioning doesn't work for me.

I'm also physically disabled. Labor-intensive methods are beyond my abilities. I enjoy gardening with ornamentals (not vegetables), but it's a challenge to do the planting and maintenance. I don't wish you to change the magazine; I'd just like you to hear a different perspective. Although some articles are beyond my reach, I very much enjoy the house-related articles (for dreaming!). And I have used many of the various ways to simplify, cut down and reuse in my life.

Things that appeal to me are: (1) continue to include minor (easy, cheap) ways to improve one's life; (2) some non-fresh alternatives in recipes, including canned or frozen ingredients (is that heresy?); (3) simple recipes with only three to five ingredients; (4) recipes using slow cookers

or breadmakers; (5) continued explanation and analysis of various methods and appliances such as water heaters.

Thanks for listening,

— DEBBIE D'AMELIO  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Hi, Debbie. All of our readers ask us for simple-living tips. It's far from heresy! Check out page 31 for a basic but delectable spring quiche recipe you can bake in a store-bought crust. You can even simplify it further; the only crucial ingredients are the fresh eggs, milk and cream.

## Black Hills Blogger

I am a freelance writer living in the Black Hills of South Dakota. A few years ago, I began to hunt for a home. A real, it's-OK-to-remodel-the-bathroom home. I wanted a yard, and a compost pile, and a garden. That landed me in the magazine aisle at my local bookstore.

I picked up *Natural Home* for the first time and immediately noticed it was different. The paper was different. The colors were different. The content was different. The whole energy was different. When I go through my stack of magazines, I normally find two or three dog-eared pages marking articles I liked. *Natural Home* had a bent corner on nearly every page.

I have never loved a magazine so much. I have never been so inspired, in so few pages.

*Natural Home* focuses on the health of the planet and its people, yet keeps it fun, creative and simple. Congratulations on a brilliant publication! My personal passions are food, fashion and décor, and I would love the opportunity to share some of my own ideas on your website. Thank you so much for what you do.

— JACI KENNISON  
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Jaci is now a guest blogger on our website. You can read some of her easy, creative ways to reuse and redecorate at [naturalhomemagazine.com/jaci-kennison](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/jaci-kennison). If you would like to blog, e-mail us at [editor@naturalhomemagazine.com](mailto:editor@naturalhomemagazine.com).

## Natural Bedbug Control

My homeopath recommended lavender when we had bedbugs in our basement TV room. A few drops of lavender essential oil rid us of the problem, and we keep some lavender buds down there to keep the critters away. They don't like the smell of lavender. We can't understand why pest control people haven't figured this out.

— BARBARA MARIN  
DECATUR, GEORGIA



## Recycling Woes

We asked our Facebook friends: What are the most difficult items to recycle? Here are some of our favorite responses!

We don't have curbside recycling in our area, and the county is closing down many drop-off facilities. I try to collect all of my plastic bags and return them to the grocery store, and avoid using them entirely when possible. What do I do with the heavier plastic bags—for example, the ones frozen fruit or veggies come in? They usually have a reclosable zipper. Should I just return them with my shopping bags?

—AMY TROOP

Wine bottles—they're heavy and really can't be reused at home like jars, boxes and some plastic containers. Plus, I feel like a lush at the recycling center.

—TOMMY LIGHT

Hi, Amy and Tommy. Recycling rules vary from place to place. Before tossing stuff in the bin, call your local recycling center to find out their guidelines. Our online guide can help you find places to recycle unusual objects. Check it out at [naturalhomemagazine.com/recycling-guide](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/recycling-guide).

## Secondhand Shopping

We asked our Facebook friends: How often do you buy used and secondhand items? Here are some of our favorite responses!

All the time! I curbside "shop" on trash day and at Dumpsters at the nearby college at the end of the semester. I call it gleaning.

—JERUSHA MYERS

Our city has "Mayor's pick-up" every spring. Stuff on the curb is picked up almost instantly by those that need it. It's the best recycling program ever!

—RICHARD RARICK

## Plant Appreciation

I love plants; my home is full of them. I gave away more than 150 plants when cool weather was coming, as I didn't have room to move them all inside for winter from our decks and patios! Plants not only filter the air, but they are like old friends!

—SONDA BRUCE, VIA FACEBOOK

## Share your thoughts

We love getting feedback about what you see or would like to see in *Natural Home*. Send your message via e-mail, Facebook, phone or letter. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number.

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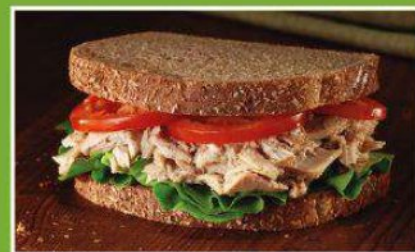
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\*As compared to conventional brands





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# True Visionary

Tack up inspiration and style with a personalized vision board.

**AN EASY DIY PROJECT**, an inspiration board is a thought-provoking, kinetic piece of personalized art that reminds you to focus on what's truly important to you. Vision boards are forums where you and your loved ones can post inspirational images and sayings that remind you to focus on your unique set of desires—whether it's painting your bedroom, planting a spring garden or living simply.



## BUILD YOUR BOARD

Consider your vision board an ever-evolving art project. You can personalize the space and pick and choose elements based on how you and your family intend to use it. We cut a piece of Homasote fiberboard—a recycled, tackable material—to fit a vintage frame and wrapped it in fabric for a polished look, but there are many options out there. You could adhere cork tiles to a wall, hang a ready-made cork board or mount vintage metal trays and attach cut-outs with magnets.

Make a weekly or monthly activity out of clipping and arranging inspirational pictures and phrases. Taking items off the board may be as important as putting them up. Consider how many items you can “check off” your vision board each month.

If you’re planning a vacation, hang photos and articles about the places you hope to explore. If you have a remodeling project in mind, tack up how-to articles from magazines or color combinations that catch your eye. Want a great job? Clip inspirations that suggest abundance in your career. If you have children, you can use the board to teach them about goal-setting. What’s going on in your children’s lives? What images encourage good study habits and their rewards? Is there a piano recital or a swim meet coming up?

## SUPPORT YOUR VISION (BOARD)

Collect a variety of “accessories” to use with your board. If your vision board isn’t near a desk or table, you might consider hanging a shelf or finding a small, secondhand table for supplies. Store fun pushpins, tape, colored paper, scissors, magnets and whatever else strikes your fancy in repurposed vessels. You can find unique pushpins made of vintage items on Etsy (see Resources), or make them yourself out of old earrings and brooches.

Use a pretty basket or box to store magazines, catalogs and newspapers you collect throughout the month. After each “clip session,” visualize getting rid of everything that doesn’t support your desires as you toss the magazines into the recycle bin. To play up your vision board, thoughtfully consider its surroundings. A ceiling-mounted track light or lamp can add emphasis; a comfortable chair and area rug encourage “hanging out” or meditation; and a nearby houseplant can symbolize personal growth.

### Daily Affirmations

Three ways to give yourself a little daily reminder of your goals

- 1. Set two favorite bowls near your board.** On the first day of the month, one bowl is empty and one has 31 pebbles. Every day, move a pebble to its new bowl. To carry inspiration in your pocket, take the day’s pebble with you and return it to the appropriate bowl in the evening.
- 2. Place a leaf, petal or trinket** from your daily travels in your bowl. As the days go by, look at your collection. Do you see a common thread? What might it symbolize?
- 3. Write a daily goal** on a note and place it in the bowl. When it is full, remove each item and reflect on where, when and why you wrote it.

## RESOURCES

### BOARDS AND FRAMES

**eBay**  
 ebay.com  
*vintage frames, metal trays*

**Homasote**  
 homasote.com  
*recycled tackable panels*

**Quill**  
 quill.com  
*Cradle-to-Cradle-certified cork boards*

**Terracycle**  
 terracycle.net  
*recycled wine cork bulletin board*

**TIAS**  
 tias.com  
*vintage frames*

### BINS AND BASKETS

**The Container Store**  
 containerstore.com  
*natural and recycled-fiber baskets and bins*

**Ten Thousand Villages**  
 tenthousandvillages.com  
*fair-trade baskets, bins*

### ACCESSORIES

**Button Ups Designs**  
 etsy.com/shop/buttonupsdesigns  
*antique button pushpins*

**libbyjoy1**  
 etsy.com/shop/libbyjoy1  
*vintage jewelry pushpins*

**Near Sea Naturals**  
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*organic and natural fabrics*

JAMI LIN uses her perpetual vision board to visualize goals and to maximize ever-changing feng shui energies. Visit her at [jamilin.com](http://jamilin.com).



# Model-T Home

This mass-produced, superefficient home might just be the future of housing.



The L41 home lives large with tons of built-in storage and dual-function designs. PHOTO COURTESY KATZ ARCHITECTURE

**THOUGH HIS HOMES ARE SMALL**, Michael Katz's goals are big. "The major objective of the L41 home is to play a part in mass-producing houses that are so affordable that, before the end of this century, all the people in the world can have proper shelter," says the Vancouver, British Columbia-based architect. "Affordability, mass production, quality, high design and sustainability is the L41 home manifesto."

Katz uses assembly-line technology to create delightful, energy-efficient homes that most prospective homeowners can afford. Based on a 220-square-foot studio module, the expandable, stackable units are also available as a 290-square-foot one-bedroom unit or a 360-square-foot two-bedroom unit, and can stand alone or be stacked and combined into almost limitless combinations for multi-family dwellings. Artist Janet Come co-developed the homes with Katz to ensure a design that's "delightful, livable, even downright luxurious," Katz says.

Katz plans to have the units on the market this summer. Though prices are being finalized, he says studio models will cost less than \$60,000. Learn more: [katzarchitecture.com](http://katzarchitecture.com)

**1** The L41 generates and stores solar electricity on-site through photovoltaic and solar thermal heating and cooling cells on its green roof.

**2** The home's main construction material, cross-laminated timber, is made by laminating and gluing beetle-kill pine (literally pine trees killed by beetles) under high pressure into panels strong enough to substitute for concrete. Katz says in British Columbia alone, more than 35 billion cubic feet of beetle-kill trees—enough to build 100 million L41 units—are available.

**3** The exterior is made of durable, waterproof zinc panels. Zinc requires less energy to produce than most other metals, and it's often made with recycled material.

**4** The front porch connects to the home via a three-panel sliding-glass wall that retracts into an outdoor storage closet.

**5** When possible (based on location), geothermal heating and cooling systems will keep homes comfortable year-round.





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# It Takes a Village

I'd love to green my home, add a guest house, and create a more welcoming place for my monthly community-building get-togethers with friends and neighbors. It's not just about me having a cute little home. I want to be part of something bigger than myself.

—JENNIFER DUFF, MESA, ARIZONA

**FROM HER 1,240-SQUARE-FOOT**, 100-year-old Craftsman bungalow, Jennifer Duff can walk downtown and to her favorite coffee house, yoga studio and wine bar. "It feels like Mayberry within a big city," she says. Once a month, Jennifer throws a party to encourage community and self-expression among old friends and new acquaintances—the likes of which Mayberry's never seen. Musicians play on her front porch, fire spinners perform on the lawn, and people from divergent backgrounds share libations and conversation. Jennifer wants to spruce up her backyard for these events, build a guest house and garage, and make her home more efficient and less resource-heavy in the process.



In Jennifer's hot desert climate, overheating is a big issue. A porch shading the south-facing front of her house and a pecan tree that shades the roof until noon help cool the house considerably. An African sumac tree partially shades the backyard, but the west side of the house—the hottest side—is unprotected. The hot afternoon sun hits the west-facing single-pane windows all day, baking the interior.

Don Titmus of Four Directions PermaCulture suggests several ways to minimize the heat sink:

- Replace some of the concrete driveway with compacted decomposed granite, allowing water to percolate into the soil.
- Add taller, denser plantings to the existing west-side oleander hedge for more afternoon shading.
- Build a trellis over the driveway to shade the house and parking area.
- Add tall, dense trees northwest of the house, where the hot summer sun sets.

## BACKYARD BONANZA

"Stacking functions" is a permaculture term for accomplishing several things in one gesture. Titmus put this to work in Jennifer's backyard, where a proposed western shade trellis could also act as a welcoming gateway to the backyard social space. The existing African sumac tree in the backyard provides both shade and a space-defining umbrella for parties, and placing the rainwater storage tank near the entrance to the social space shows off a clever rainwater-collection system.

## Easy Energy Fixes

Steve Shinn of Homework Remodels found four cheap, easy ways for Jennifer to save energy.

1. Seal air leaks.
2. Improve insulation levels and coverage.
3. Add solar screens to unshaded windows.
4. Replace the oversized, inefficient, 12-year-old heat pump with a high-efficiency, correctly sized unit.





A fire spinner wows the crowd at one of Jennifer Duff's monthly community gatherings for friends and neighbors.

PHOTO BY CAROL VENOLIA

After she gets rid of some of the concrete driveway, Titmus proposes Jennifer use the broken-up concrete pads (tinted with liquid iron for an earthy look) to build raised planter beds with built-in seating, which can define sub-areas within the larger social space. The backyard's open areas, including the decomposed-granite driveway and the areas covered with salvaged pavers, could be used for mingling or for tables and chairs.

A trellised gazebo near the house would offer a cozy shaded space—and a great al fresco eating area. A new stage and patio in the corner of the backyard could provide a performance spot and dance floor when there's music; a place for tables and chairs; and a flat sculpture made of salvaged bits of pavers, stones and other lovely objects.

When Jennifer builds her guest house and garage, she could use the excavated soil to build earthen benches and a bread/pizza oven in the backyard. A row of citrus trees would create privacy between the backyard social space and the guest house yard while providing food. Titmus suggests planting mesquite trees, which provide beans that can be milled into flour, and palo verdes, which grow edible pods that taste like edamame.

## GUSHING OVER

Rain from Jennifer's front roof goes directly into planter beds. She could collect rainwater from the back roof as well, just by adding gutters. To better use rainwater, Titmus suggests contouring the ground surface in Jennifer's lawn to direct rainwater to planted areas. When she adds gutters, Jennifer could also pipe some rainwater directly to trees and shrubs, and add salvaged drums to collect stormwater for use during dry spells.

Jennifer could easily collect graywater from the two bathrooms and laundry room grouped on the east side of the house. Graywater from the bathroom could water the oleander hedge on the east side, and washing machine rinses, propelled by a pump, could water Jennifer's more distant trees and shrubs.

## RESOURCES

Four Directions  
PermaCulture  
[4dirs.com/fdpc](http://4dirs.com/fdpc)

Homework Remodels  
[homeworkremodels.com](http://homeworkremodels.com)

## FURTHER READING

*Earth-Friendly  
Desert Gardening*  
by Cathy Cromell, Jo Miller  
and Lucy K. Bradley

*Rainwater Harvesting  
for Drylands and Beyond*  
by Brad Lancaster

CAROL VENOLIA is a California architect and coauthor of *Natural Remodeling for the Not-So-Green House*. She believes it's crucial that we broaden the context of green remodeling to include community and larger ecosystems.

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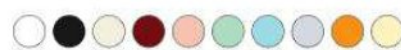


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# Pipe Dreams

Use nutrient-rich graywater to irrigate your yard and take advantage of nature's ready-made wastewater filtration system.

**THOUGH 70 PERCENT** of the earth's surface is covered with water, only about 1 percent of that is suitable for human use—and we are gulping this precious resource at ever-expanding rates. As world population grows steadily, our water use doubles every 20 years. Water tables are falling and pollution renders more water unusable.

But fear not! It's easy to make a big difference simply by reusing some of the water that needlessly flows out of our household drains. Graywater, the used water from sinks, showers, tubs, dishwashers and washing machines, represents 50 to 80 percent of home "waste" water. Rather than sending it to treatment plants, you can redirect it to your yard and garden and let nature's filter do its work.

## EVERY PLAN IS CUSTOM

For generations, people have washed their dishes in a basin, then dumped the water on the flowerbed—and that's graywater use at its simplest. If you can access your sink drain, you can remove the P-trap, collect drain water in a bucket and use that water to flush the toilet. With just a bit more effort and some inexpensive tubing, you can create a safe, plant-loving graywater distribution system suited to your garden and lifestyle.

Graywater is most commonly used for landscape irrigation—a great, resource-effective marriage of nutrient-rich water with plant needs. Each system must be designed and operated in response to the particular circumstances, including climate, rainfall, property size, soil types, lifestyle and landscaping. As graywater guru and author of *The New Create an Oasis with Greywater* Art Ludwig says, "There are no general principles."

## TWO SIMPLE SYSTEMS

Though it's fairly simple, designing a good graywater system does require thought and planning. If you're handy, you can probably do some reading and learn all you need to design your own system, or you may want to hire a professional (see Resources on page 88 for book, website and installer references). The system should be as simple as possible. Pumps, filters and nozzles can become clogged by particulate matter, so it's best to avoid them altogether. Keeping it simple also makes for an affordable system. Here are two of Ludwig's favorites:

**Branched Drain to Mulch Basins:** This is the most direct way to water downslope trees and shrubs with graywater. By tapping faucet and appliance pipes into a graywater waste line, then running a valved pipe through the wall to the outdoors, you can convey water directly from sinks, tubs and showers to your yard. Once outside, you can add a piece of piping called a plumbing wye to create a branched drain, which splits graywater flow and directs it to multiple



## Not Black and White

### Using a graywater system:

- reduces fresh-water demand, saving money and resources.
- saves energy and reduces pollution by sending less water to treatment plants or septic systems.
- recharges the groundwater supply and provides nutrients to the soil.

### A graywater system might not be appropriate if you have:

- insufficient space
- inaccessible drain pipes
- extremely impermeable or permeable soil (graywater can pond on the surface or reach the water table unprocessed)
- a very wet or very cold climate
- a location where laws don't permit graywater use





## Healthy Handling

It's not wise to drink graywater or handle it directly, but with some basic precautions, graywater use is safe. No cases of illness transmitted from a graywater system have been documented in the United States. To be on the safe side, follow these safety tips from graywater expert Art Ludwig.

- Don't store graywater for more than 24 hours; bacteria could multiply and transform it to unsafe, bacteria-ridden blackwater.
- Limit the amount of cleaning supplies.
- Avoid borax, a plant toxin.
- Avoid chlorine bleach and non-chlorine bleach with sodium perborate (liquid hydrogen peroxide is nontoxic).
- Use cleaners with little or no sodium; liquids are better than powders.
- Avoid cleaners containing whiteners, softeners or enzymes.
- Don't distribute graywater via perforated pipe or small nozzles, which are likely to clog.
- Label graywater components and wear gloves when handling them.
- Don't apply graywater via a sprinkler, aerially to lawns or directly to foliage.
- Don't apply graywater to storm-saturated soils.
- Don't irrigate with graywater near a well.
- Don't water vegetables with graywater (use it on ornamentals or on fruit trees via mulch beds).
- Don't discharge graywater directly into bodies of water or onto hardscaping.

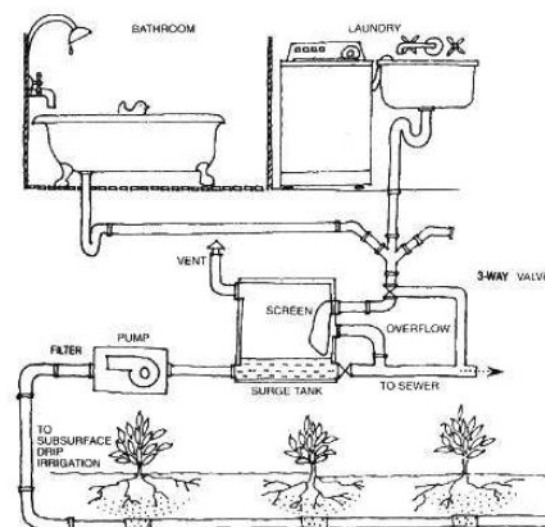
plants. Branched draining avoids ponding and runoff problems that can occur if you drain to one spot. Once the graywater arrives at a plant, it's best to run it into a mulch basin—a doughnut-shaped hole dug around a plant, with the excavated soil piled around the hole. The hole is filled with mulch, preferably wood chips, which contain and cover the flow, slow runoff, retard evaporation and provide biological treatment.

**Laundry to Landscape:** Ludwig calls this “the simplest, least expensive, lowest-effort way to get the most graywater out onto the landscape most effectively.” A diverter valve mounted on the wall behind the clothes washer sends wash water through the wall or window to a hose connection, allowing easy distribution to mulch beds at trees and shrubs. Depending on the setup, you may also need a vacuum breaker, automatic bypass for freezing weather and backflow prevention valve. Not only can this system water downhill plantings, but the washing machine's pump provides extra oomph to irrigate up to two feet above the top of the washing machine and up to 200 feet away.

## KEEP IT LEGAL

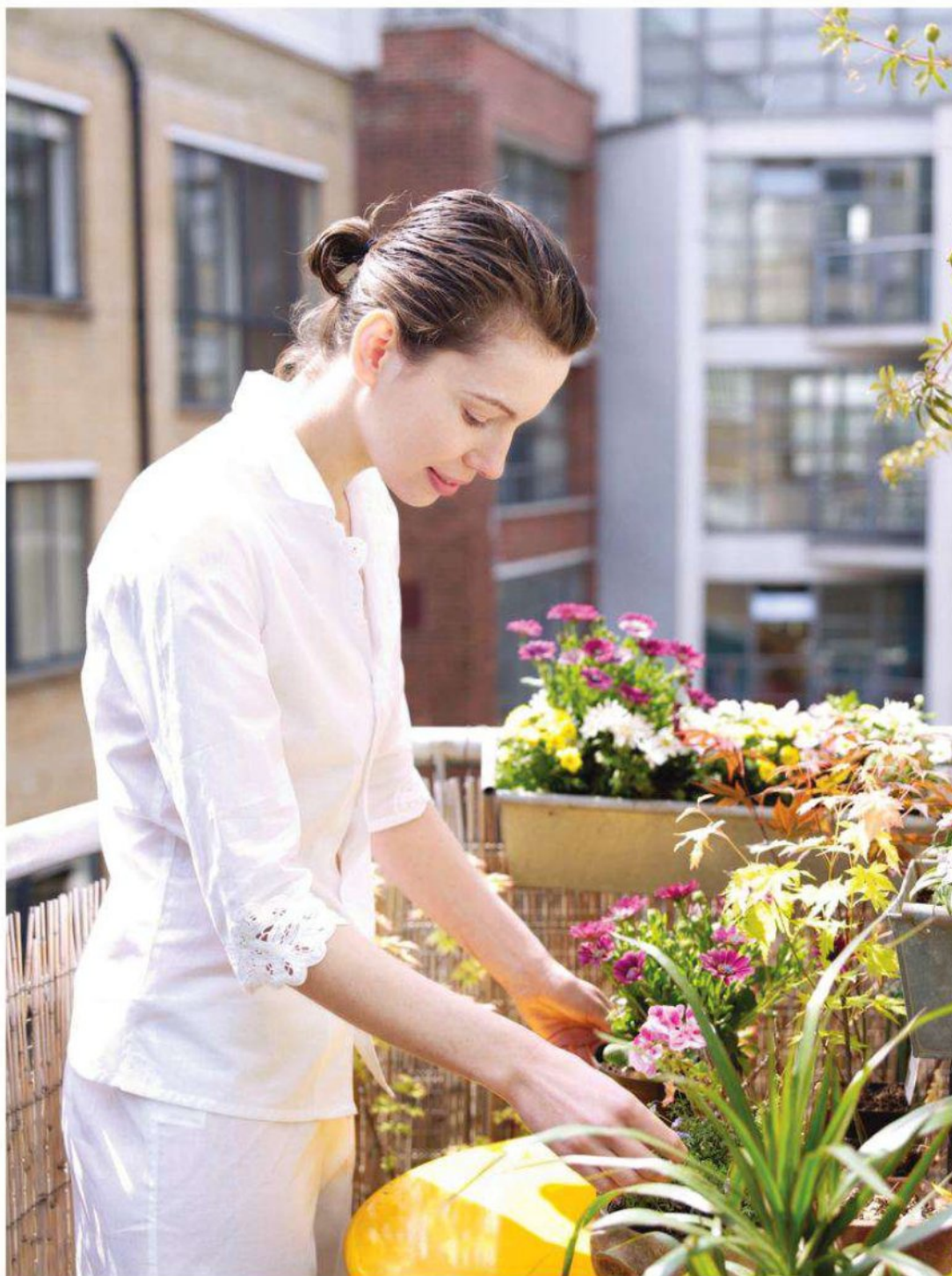
Graywater systems' legal status is a hot and ever-evolving topic. Only a few years ago, graywater use was either illegal or outside the law in most of the United States. As water scarcity issues come to the fore, many municipalities are legalizing graywater systems. Check with your local health department. For a general roundup of graywater policies around the country, check out [oasisdesign.net/greywater/law/index.htm](http://oasisdesign.net/greywater/law/index.htm).

— CAROL VENOLIA



SOURCE CA DEPT OF WATER RESOURCES GRAYWATER GUIDE





## Small Space? Grow Up!

With a little creativity and the right plants, you can grow a stellar garden—no yard necessary.

**YOUR GARDEN COULD DEFY THE LAWS OF PHYSICS.** Designing a gravity-busting vertical garden doesn't require much—a little design creativity, a few upwardly mobile plants and the right tools for the task are really all you need to create a small-space garden bursting with fresh food, gorgeous blooms and tantalizing scents. Don't let silly details (like not having a yard) deprive you of the wonders of a garden.





### UP AND AT 'EM

Begin your garden by choosing gravity-defiant plants that grow upward such as squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, passionflower, morning glories, honeysuckle, clematis, ivies and wisteria. Place pots on mounted wall shelves, buy or build stackable planters, and use trellises. Vertical planting allows for creative development!

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The direction your balcony or patio faces is of major importance. Most plants require at least five sunny hours a day. Wind exposure can be a problem. Be cautious of unprotected open areas—you can create windbreaks with planted trellises on balconies or rows of shrubs near patios. Consult experienced neighbors or local nurseries to determine the best plants for your location.

### BUG OFF

Be on the lookout for harmful pests and their eggs. It's easy, safe and simple to remove damaging eggs and pests by hand. If you use commercial sprays, ask your local nursery for nontoxic suggestions.

### WEIGH IN

If you're growing on a balcony, pay attention to weight limitations. Your landlord or homeowners' association should be able to provide information on the amount of weight your balcony can support. Total weight per plant includes pot, plant, soil and water. To reduce weight, try cedarwood or lightweight biodegradable plastic containers. (Do not grow food in plastics with the recycling codes 3, 6 or 7.)

### FEED ME, SEYMOUR

Plants in containers with limited soil quickly eat up available nutrients. Supplement with organic fertilizers suited to your plants. Some options include worm compost, kelp meal, bone meal and organic cottonseed meal.

### WATER IN, WATER OUT

For easy watering, consider attaching a hose adaptor to your kitchen faucet. For good drainage, drill several holes in your container bottoms and line them with about 3 inches of gravel under the topsoil.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Incorporate your personality into your garden by choosing a pretty assortment of reclaimed and secondhand containers.

### PLANT PALS

Choose compatible plants. For example, tomatoes and basil have the same need for light, water and feeding—and they make a great pasta dinner. Seeds of Change offers a handy chart of great plant partners: [naturalhomemagazine.com/vertical-gardening](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/vertical-gardening).

### DEEP DOWN

Plant seeds in containers at the same depth as you would in the ground. A good general rule: Do not plant deeper than four times the seed's thickness.

### WINTER WARM-UP

For safe overwintering, you can set containers on wooden blocks and surround them with a spacious plastic bag filled with bubble wrap, sawdust or leaves. Without this insulation, cold weather can seriously damage plants. Small containers, including those made of plastic and terra cotta, are susceptible to cracking.

— Reprinted with permission from *Easy Balcony Gardening* ([easybalconygardening.com](http://easybalconygardening.com)).

**SMALL-SPACE GARDENING RESOURCES: PAGE 88**





## Upward Inspiration

Inspired by his visits to tropical rainforests, French scientist and artist Patrick Blanc developed a system for growing plants on walls lined with felt, inventing the first manmade vertical gardens in the 1980s. Since then, Blanc's astounding gardens have become world-renowned, and ready-made home vertical growing kits have become easy to find. Though it would be difficult to mimic Blanc's lavish living wall gardens, you can take inspiration from his genius when designing your own vertical garden. Learn more: [verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com](http://verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com)

ABOVE: London's Athenaeum Hotel near Hyde Park features a Patrick Blanc living wall.

## Let's Get It Started

Vertical gardening systems make small-space garden planning a snap.



**Woolly Pockets**  
woollypocket.com  
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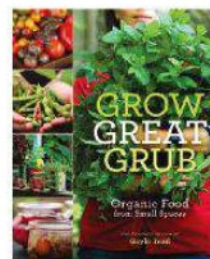
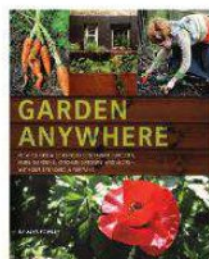
**The Original Urban Garden**  
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Blogging balcony gardener Mike Lieberman shares his gardening exploits at [urbanorganicgardener.com](http://urbanorganicgardener.com).

## Drink Up

Los Angeles urban gardener and blogger Mike Lieberman grew an awesome hanging garden made from soda bottles. He offers instructions to make your own: [urbanorganicgardener.com/how-to-make-a-hanging-herb-planter-using-recycled-soda-bottles](http://urbanorganicgardener.com/how-to-make-a-hanging-herb-planter-using-recycled-soda-bottles)



## Read Up

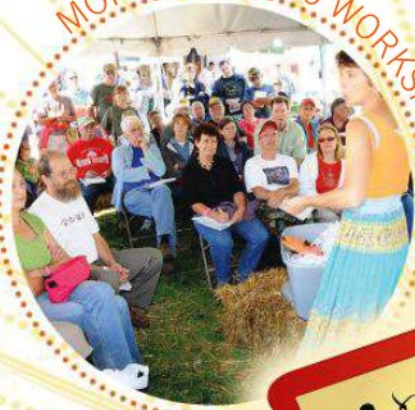
For the lowdown on great gardening in any-size space, try *Garden Anywhere* by Alys Fowler and *Grow Great Grub* by Gayla Trail. Both books offer loads of useful hints and gobs of gorgeous images designed to educate and inspire. To order: [naturalhomemagazine.com/shopping](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/shopping)



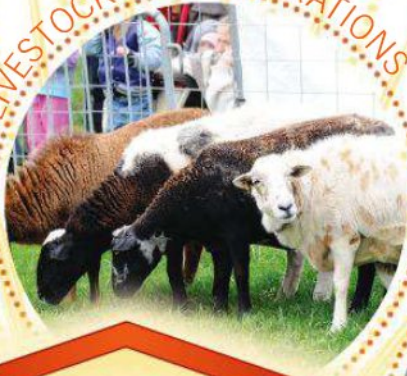
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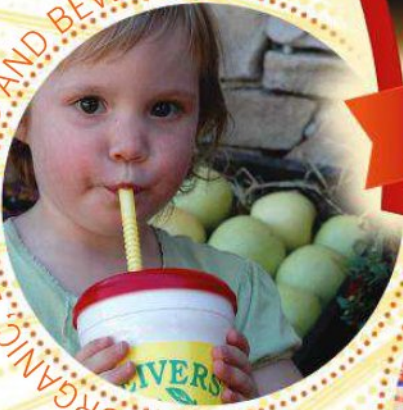
LIVESTOCK DEMONSTRATIONS



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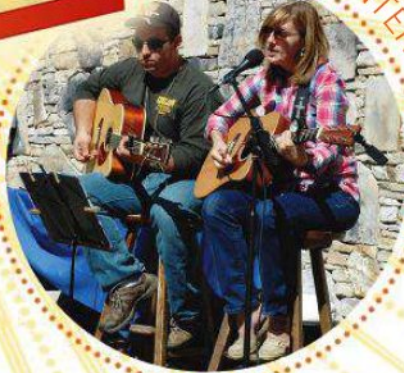
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# Hip to Be Square

Square-Foot Gardening is an easy-to-plan way to grow gobs of produce in one-fifth the space of a typical garden.

IN 1975, gardener Mel Bartholomew was frustrated with the amount of time and effort his garden took. He wondered why seed packets instructed him to fertilize the entire garden area, but plant vegetables in long, skinny rows with 3-foot aisles on both sides. Weeds naturally take up residence in those long aisles, and he didn't want a full row of 30 cabbage plants—he just wanted a few. If he did plant 30 cabbages, he certainly didn't want them all to ripen at the exact same time. When he asked gardening friends for an explanation of this traditional single-row approach, he found their explanations less than satisfactory (most were “that's just what you do”).

He started doing some research, and discovered the single-row gardening method was a hand-me-down technique from large-field crop farming. It was designed for high-volume food producers who wanted to harvest crops with machines and take them to market to sell, not for the home gardener who wants vegetables to eat throughout the growing season.

Bartholomew also found it odd that most seed packets instruct gardeners to plant a whole packet (more than 1,000 seeds) in one long row, then to thin seedlings to one every 6 inches when they sprout. He tried something that seemed simple: He planted one seed every 6 inches, then planted a second row 6 inches from the first. When his garden grew successfully, he had a plan.

Bartholomew developed the Square-Foot Gardening method and wrote a book of the same name. Square-Foot Gardening requires one-fifth the space and, he says, one-fifth the work to produce as many vegetables as a typical garden. Using the method, gardeners plant crops within a grid of individual one-foot squares. (Bartholomew recommends growing in raised beds to ensure high-quality soil.) Depending on a plant's mature size, a certain number fits neatly in each square. For example, four lettuce plants fit in one square; 16 carrot plants fit in a square; spinach is nine to a square. Once you determine your garden size and choose crops, a Square-Foot Garden practically plans itself. Many school programs have adopted Square-Foot Gardening for its easy-to-understand design and high productivity. Bartholomew's recent book, *All New Square Foot Gardening*, is updated with the tricks and tools he has learned over the past few decades of practicing and teaching his method. Learn more: [squarefootgardening.com](http://squarefootgardening.com)

## Mel Bartholomew's Perfect Growing Mix

½ PEAT MOSS: Available at any garden center.

½ VERMICULITE: Buy coarse grade in 4-cubic-foot bags at garden centers or home improvement stores.

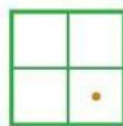
½ BLENDED COMPOST: If you don't compost at home, buy bags at the garden center. You must have blended compost, so don't buy all the same kind.



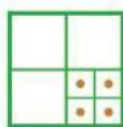
Many kids' programs use Square-Foot Gardening for its easy planning and excellent productivity. PHOTO BY FRANK WERTHEIM

## How Many Plants Fit?

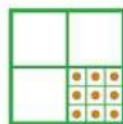
Most seed packets instruct gardeners on the number of inches apart plants should be thinned to. Using that number as a guide, you can plot out your Square-Foot Garden:



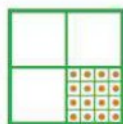
Plants that should be thinned to 12 inches apart:  
Plant one per square foot.



Plants that should be thinned to 6 inches apart:  
Plant four per square foot.

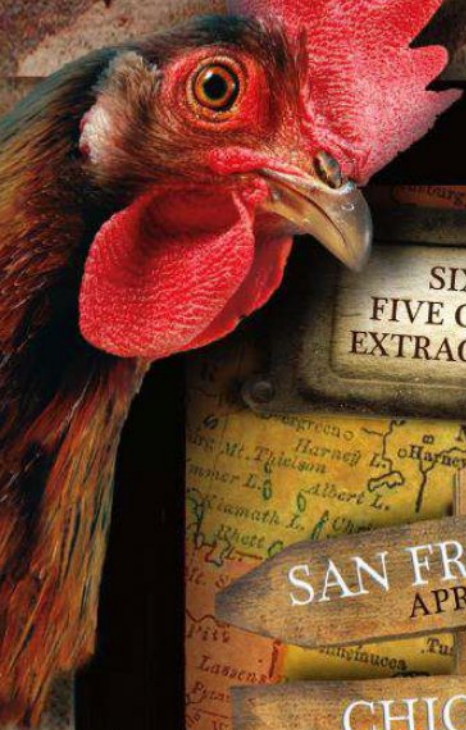


Plants that should be thinned to 4 inches apart:  
Plant nine per square foot.



Plants that should be thinned to 3 inches apart:  
Plant 16 per square foot.





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# Putting Up A Good Front (Yard)

Water-conserving native plants infuse new life into a bland landscape design.

BY CAROL VENOLIA

**MY FRONT YARD WAS HO-HUM AT BEST** when I moved into my house several years ago. Industrial shrubs, lavender bushes and Japanese maples marched in rows across a pebbled landscape, punctuated by cobblestone patches. Because the yard's only redeeming quality was a beautiful oak tree a few feet in front of the house, I vowed to replace the random, water-gulping plants and create a native wildlife habitat garden surrounding the grand old tree.

Last spring, I sat gazing at my transformed front yard, serene under several inches of fresh sawdust—all that remained of the oak tree, which had begun to invade my house and its foundation several months before. Here and there a shrub poked above the yellow-brown frosting, but otherwise it was a blank canvas. Without the oak tree, my yard was in even more need of an overhaul, and the time was right for a whole-yard renovation.

Beneath the blank surface, I found the sedimentary layers of my yard's rich history, like a geological formation. As I excavated, I uncovered remnants of former groundcovers: rounded pebbles, sharper rocks, jagged white rocks, dyed-red pumice stones. And under all that? A layer of plastic covering the entire yard, limiting root penetration, suffocating soil microorganisms and allowing rainwater to pour off into the street.

Before I could plant, there was work to do.



Carol hopes to mimic the California desert in her front yard.



Bold native California poppies burst with color.

## UNEARTHING THE GIFTS

As with any design challenge, my first priority was to assess the site's gifts and challenges. I considered my home's west-facing orientation. Like most in my neighborhood, my home mostly faces the backyard, but the front yard and rooms (my office and a bedroom) bake in the afternoon sun, becoming uncomfortably hot. However, prevailing breezes also come from the west, and the front yard provides a relaxing view of oak-studded hills to the north. I have no front porch, and activity on the street is minimal.

The front yard would require a major overhaul, so I needed to think about the soil and hardscape already there. The heavy clay soil would alter many of my plant selections, as many of my favorite plants prefer well-drained soil. Getting down to bare dirt in the front yard would leave me with big piles of rocks, dirt and sawdust, which I didn't want to send to the landfill. I also noted that my backyard had a lovely spot for a shade garden, under the long branches of a willow tree along the adjacent creek.

Finally, I had to consider social and fire-safety issues as I planned my new landscape. Fire safety suggests a "defensible zone" around the house, free of flammable plantings.

## RIDING THE RANCHO

Before we removed the oak tree, my arborist pointed out that dropping tons of wood would likely damage the front-yard plants. We dug up and replanted the lavender bushes and Japanese maples in the shadier backyard, and I offered the remaining plants to my neighbors. After the oak was gone, I hired laborers to peel back my front yard's layers. At the end of the day, I had a bare-dirt slope, a huge sawdust pile and smaller piles of cobblestones, round rocks, little sharp rocks and clay soil.

As I began to re-imagine my home's face to the world, friends suggested an edible landscape. But on a west-facing slope, it would take a lot of water to grow food. I decided instead to transform this plain-Jane suburban box into a rancho—one of the low-slung homes that dotted California's sagebrush plains before the style was diminished to the tract "ranch house."





A row of agaves will welcome visitors to Carol's home.

I envisioned chaparral and sagebrush plantings—drought-adapted and appropriate for this hot, dry front yard. I began to select native manzanita and toyon, sage and coyote brush, and wildflowers such as monkeyflower, California fuchsia and California poppy. My rancho would even have a classic row of big, gray-green agaves to greet visitors.

#### DESIGN IS ALIVE

Next I added an arbor-shaded patio, made from willow branches harvested in the backyard, along the front of the house. This helps enhance the place's ranch image, provides a hang-out place, shades the house from the hot afternoon sun and creates a plant-free, fire-discouraging zone.

I noted that rain from two downspouts was washing soil to the bottom of the yard and into the street. I carved meandering "streams" from the downspouts through the yard, slowing the flow and encouraging the water to sink into the soil. The salvaged cobblestones help define the curves, and the rescued round pebbles fill the streambed, creating an attractive dry creek in summer. I used the stockpiled soil and gravel to form mounds throughout my formerly flat yard, improving drainage and visual interest. A sawdust layer on top acts as a moisture-retaining mulch (not too thick, to avoid stealing nitrogen from plants).

As I got to know my chosen plants, the landscape design's final pieces fell into place. I charted their sun, water and soil needs, then cut out circles representing their mature size and moved them around on my site plan. I departed from the native theme to add a bed of succulents outside the front door; they fit the low-water-use scheme, and they make me happy. I placed the sage bushes upwind of my office. Who could have a rough day with the scent of sage wafting in on a warm breeze?

The plants are now in the ground, and a new world is emerging in my front yard. This process has confirmed my sense that when I observe, investigate and stay open, design virtually does itself. Over and over, liabilities became resources, avoiding waste.

Best of all, I've created much more than a vegetated façade for my house. I've set in motion new relationships with plants, animals, earth, wind and rain that will continue as long as I live here.



CAROL VENOLIA is an architect and co-author of *Natural Remodeling for the Not-So-Green House*.  
cvenolia@naturalhomemagazine.com

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cuspnaturalproducts.com  
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**West County Gloves (pictured)**  
westcountygardener.com  
*recycled PET plastic gloves*

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cowpots.com  
*composted cow manure seed-starting pots*

**DOT Pots**  
dotpots.com  
*organic wood-pulp pots*

**EcoForms**  
ecoforms.com  
*rice hull pots*

**EnviroArc (pictured)**  
enviroarc.net  
*bamboo pulp planters*

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**Fiskars (pictured)**  
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**Spear and Jackson**  
gardenhardware.com

**Stihl**  
stihlusa.com

**Toro**  
toro.com



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ahamodernliving.com  
recycled plastic Elephant and Aqua Genie Watering Cans

**The Literacy Site** (pictured)  
theliteracysite.com  
Recycled Sheet Metal Watering Can

**Real Goods**  
realgoods.com  
Recycled Sheet Metal Watering Can

**Sprout Home**  
sprouthome.com  
recycled plastic, branch-shaped Water Logged Watering Can

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**Bacon Square Farm**  
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greenbirdhouse.com  
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**Loll Designs** (pictured)  
loll designs.com  
Cube and Tilt birdhouses made of recycled plastic

**Recycled Birdhouse Company**  
recycledbirdhouse.com  
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sprouthome.com  
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Circle #5; see card pg 81

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Circle #16; see card pg 81





## A Spring in Your Step

Make a farmhouse-inspired meal with fresh flavors and flaky handmade pastry.

BY PIETER DIJKSTRA

**MILK, EGGS, CHEESE AND BUTTER** are at their flavor and nutrition peak during spring and summer, when cows and chickens graze on bright green pastures. Take advantage of spring's bounty with a flaky quiche, buttery shortcakes and freshly whipped cream.



## Spring Quiche

This spring favorite is an easy way to feed a crowd.

### FOR THE CRUST:

You can make your own handmade, buttery quiche shell by following the simple instructions at [naturalhomemagazine.com/pastry-shell](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/pastry-shell). You could also use a high-quality, premade pastry shell and follow the pre-cooking instructions that come with it. (This recipe is intended for a large, deep crust; you may need two premade crusts.) Fill the store-bought or homemade pastry shell with our quiche mixture, up to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the top of the crust.

You could also choose to eschew the pastry entirely, and bake a crustless quiche in a glass baking dish. Simply pour a little of the egg mixture into the pan as the first layer, then reduce bake time to 20 to 25 minutes, or until the top is slightly firm and golden. It will form a thin crust.

### QUICHE FILLING:

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup shallots, minced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 ounce fresh spinach
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Swiss or Asiago cheese, shredded, divided
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 8 eggs
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon white pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon fresh nutmeg, grated

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Heat oil in a sauté pan to medium-high. Add mushrooms, thyme and shallots.
3. Cook for 5 minutes, add butter and cook 5 more minutes. Add spinach, cook for 2 minutes, and set aside. Drain and discard excess liquid.
4. Layer half the mushroom mixture, then half the cheese in the crust.
5. Combine remaining ingredients (except remaining cheese and mushrooms) and blend for 1 minute, making egg mixture.
6. Pour half the egg mixture over mushrooms and cheese.
7. Layer remaining cheese, then mushroom mixture. Pour the remaining egg mixture over the top.
8. Bake for 30 minutes, then start testing center for firmness. Remove from oven when surface is slightly firm. This may take up to 90 minutes. Serves 12



PHOTO BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

### Use What's on Hand

Quiche is infinitely adaptable. You can substitute your favorite herbs and veggies (or whatever is best from your garden or the farmer's market) for the mushrooms, spinach and thyme.



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Strawberry shortcake goes gourmet with handmade shortcakes and fresh whipped cream.

PHOTO BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

## Strawberry Shortcake

Everyone loves this classic American favorite, but you'll love it even more with homemade buttery shortcakes.

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1½ cups strawberries                        | 1 cup whole milk              |
| ¼ cup plus ⅓ cup granulated sugar           | 1 egg yolk, beaten            |
| 1½ cups all-purpose flour                   | 1 tablespoon coarse raw sugar |
| 1 tablespoon baking powder                  | ½ cup heavy cream             |
| ¼ teaspoon salt                             | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract    |
| ½ cup chilled butter, cut into small pieces |                               |

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Slice strawberries and mix with ¼ cup sugar. Cover and refrigerate.
3. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder, salt, ⅓ cup sugar and butter using a pastry cutter or two forks, until the mixture looks like bread crumbs.
4. Stir in milk until combined.
5. Knead dough several times, and pat it out on a lightly floured surface until it's about ½-inch-thick.
6. Cut circles out of the dough using a 2½-inch circular pastry cutter.
7. Place shortcakes on an ungreased cookie sheet, brush tops with egg yolk and sprinkle with raw sugar.
8. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool completely.
9. Using a hand mixer or whisk, whip cream with vanilla until soft peaks are formed.
10. To serve, split shortcakes in half, and layer with whipped cream and berries. Serves 12



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Do you have awesome local foods and fantastic food producers to suggest we feature? We want to help bring attention to the good food work people all over this country are doing to revitalize local food systems. Nominate your favorites by e-mailing [food@naturalhomemagazine.com](mailto:food@naturalhomemagazine.com) with the subject line "Local Food Nomination." Be sure to tell us who you love and why. We'll feature your favorites right here from time to time.

# At Your Fingertips

Technology makes it easier than ever to find good food grown locally.

## Web Wisdom

It's easy to find sources of local food if you know where to look. These searchable databases let you scour your area for farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture groups (CSAs), free-range meat, local dairies and more:

### LOCALHARVEST

Search for farmer's markets, co-ops, CSAs and restaurants.  
[localharvest.org](http://localharvest.org)

### EATWILD

Find grass-fed meat and dairy products.  
[eatwild.com](http://eatwild.com)

### A CAMPAIGN FOR REAL MILK

Find raw milk information and resources.  
[realmilk.com](http://realmilk.com)

## iEatLocal

Head to iTunes to download the latest iPod and iPad apps fit for local foodies:

### LOCAVORE

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### IFARMMARKET

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— TABITHA ALTERMAN



# Find Your Dream Food Job

**DO YOU DREAM** of peddling fine cheeses, chocolates and charcuterie? Want to learn farming as an apprentice? Hope to sport a chef's toque someday? Check out Good Food Jobs, an online search tool designed to link people looking for meaningful food work with the businesses that need their energy. You can search for job opportunities with farmers and food artisans, policymakers and purveyors, retailers and restaurateurs, economists, ecologists and more. [goodfoodjobs.com](http://goodfoodjobs.com)

## Q&A with Taylor Cocalis, co-founder of Good Food Jobs

### What's the most interesting job that's come across your desk?

One man's dream job is another man's...well, the answer is, it depends. We've had entry-level to executive director, and everything in between. What's most interesting to you will be dependent on your prior experience, your current interests and your future plans. Recent highlights:

- Professional Chef Casting Call, Food Network; Anywhere
- Farm Help, Grassy Ridge Farm; Riegelwood, North Carolina
- Fabulous Soup Maker, The City Bakery; New York
- Cheesemonger, Cowgirl Creamery; Washington, D.C.
- Seasonal Garden Educator, Chicago Botanic Garden; Chicago
- Program Coordinator, Women, Food and Agriculture Network; Ames, Iowa

### What sector of the food industry is hot right now?

The prevailing theme is the rise in sustainable food jobs—whether it's working with markets, artisan products, farms or nonprofits.

### Where do you see the most opportunity for new careers?

Entrepreneurs. We hope we can attract enough people to good food jobs that they will eventually want to create their own good food businesses. As a culture, we've proven that the industrial food model just isn't sustainable. What we need are smaller, more decentralized food businesses that grow, make, support and/or educate people about good food.



Mark Bello, owner of New York City cooking school *Pizza a Casa* ([pizzaschool.com](http://pizzaschool.com)), spreads good-food love by teaching guests to make high-quality pizzas at home. PHOTO BY ANNABEL BRAITHWAITE

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# Oy Milk!

I am so sad! I just heard that dairy cows are impregnated and then the fetus is aborted so that we humans can have milk. Is that true? What's the best alternative?

— XOXI MCCAULEY, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



PHOTO BY TABITHA ALTERMAN

## Slam Dunk

Make these yummy oatmeal cookies to accompany your next glass of farm-fresh milk. Get the recipe: [naturalhomemagazine.com/milk-and-cookies](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/milk-and-cookies).

**THERE, THERE, XOXI**, it's understandable to cry over milked milk. Just make sure you're sobbing for the right reasons. Grab your handkerchief and hang on to your milk money.

Approximately 9 million dairy cows in the United States pump out 1,816 pounds of milk per month, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Like people, cows make milk to feed their young. To produce milk for human consumption, dairy cows are impregnated artificially. Like us, the gestation period for cows is nine months; dairy cows give birth to one calf a year and are kept producing milk for most of their nine-month term. For maximum lactation, most dairy cows are pumped full of bovine growth hormone. Many end up with an udder infection known as mastitis.

Calf abortion isn't the thing to cry over, because it's not a common industry practice. What does happen to newborn calves may unsettle you more. The calves are taken from their mothers. Most females become milk machines. Males wind up as veal.

The lifespan for a typical cow is 20 years. The average milking cow is about 4 when she's considered "spent" in industry terms. "There's no retirement home for dairy cows. Nearly 100 percent of them are taken to slaughter for beef production," says Paul Shapiro of the Humane Society's Factory Farming Campaign.

The dairy industry also has a huge impact on the planet. Factory farms, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gases worldwide. They're also the cause of 64 percent of ammonia emissions, the primary cause of acid rain. CAFOs are a leading contributor to soil and groundwater contamination.

You asked about alternatives. Soy milk is an option, but be mindful. The majority of U.S. soy is genetically modified and requires massive amounts of pesticides to produce. What's more, large swatches of rainforest are being destroyed to grow soy. Look for certified organic soy milk as well as macadamia milk, oat milk, hemp milk, rice milk, coconut milk and almond milk. Or make your own almond milk. Moby, the vegan DJ, says it's easy to milk an almond: "I just take almonds and water and put them in a blender for 45 seconds, and then strain out the chunks of almond."

There are also worthy options for milk from cows that are treated well. Look for dairy from animals who live in pastures instead of feedlots (see "Mooove Over," at right). Try to get to know your producer. Check out the database at [eatwild.com](http://eatwild.com) to find local dairies, with happier cows, nearest you.

UMBRA FISK is an advice columnist character created by *Grist Magazine*. For more environmental news, humor and inspiration, visit [grist.org](http://grist.org).



## Mooooove Over, Crummy Milk— We Want Something Udderly Better!



**THE RECENT** tremendous growth in organic food sales means grocery-store shelves are brimming with healthier options—but how do you choose the best milk? Researchers at the small farm-advocacy group Cornucopia Institute did the work for you, investigating the production practices of about 70 dairies nationwide. Their “4 Cow”- and “5 Cow”-rated superstars take sustainability seriously—producing happier cows and a healthier product. To view the complete list, see “Maintaining the Integrity of Organic Milk” at [cornucopia.org](http://cornucopia.org).

### RESOURCES

#### NATIONWIDE

Amish Country Farms  
(973) 256-7676

Camphill Village  
Kimberton Hills  
[camphillkimberton.org](http://camphillkimberton.org)

Organic Valley  
[organicvalley.coop](http://organicvalley.coop)

Whole Foods Market  
(365 Organic)  
[wholefoodsmarket.com](http://wholefoodsmarket.com)

#### EAST COAST

Evans Farmhouse Creamery  
(607) 334-5339

Hails Family Farm  
[hiskidsdairy.com](http://hiskidsdairy.com)

Hawthorne Valley Farm  
[hawthornevalleyfarm.org](http://hawthornevalleyfarm.org)

MOO – Maine’s  
Own Organic Milk  
[moomilkco.com](http://moomilkco.com)

Natural by Nature  
[natural-by-nature.com](http://natural-by-nature.com)

Strafford Organic Creamery  
[straftfordcreamery.com](http://straftfordcreamery.com)

Traders Point Creamery  
[tpforanics.com](http://tpforanics.com)

#### LAKES STATES

Castle Rock Organic Farms  
[castlerockfarms.net](http://castlerockfarms.net)

Cedar Summit Farm  
[cedarsummit.com](http://cedarsummit.com)

Crystal Ball Farms  
(715) 294-4090

Old Home  
[oldhomefoods.com](http://oldhomefoods.com)

Sassy Cow Creamery  
[sassycowcreamery.com](http://sassycowcreamery.com)

#### MIDWEST

Farmers All  
Natural Creamery  
[farmersallnaturalcreamery.com](http://farmersallnaturalcreamery.com)

Green Hills Harvest  
[ghharvest.com](http://ghharvest.com)

Hy-Vee Health Market  
[hy-vee.com](http://hy-vee.com)

Radiance Dairy  
(641) 472-8554

Totally Green  
[totallygreen.com](http://totallygreen.com)

Wisconsin Organics  
[wiorganics.com](http://wiorganics.com)

#### WEST COAST

Clover Organic Farms  
[cloverorganicfarms.com](http://cloverorganicfarms.com)

Fresh Breeze  
Organic Dairy  
[freshbreezeorganic.com](http://freshbreezeorganic.com)

Organic Pastures  
Dairy Company  
[organicpastures.com](http://organicpastures.com)

Stremicks  
Heritage Foods  
[heritage-foods.com](http://heritage-foods.com)

Sunnyside Farms  
[raleys.com](http://raleys.com)

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Circle #4; see card pg 81



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# Easy Chèvre

Perfect for spring, goat cheese is lively and lemony. It's ridiculously easy to make, and you'll never have it fresher.

## EQUIPMENT

Stockpot (large enough to hold a gallon of milk)  
Thermometer  
Slotted spoon  
Butter muslin or high-quality cheesecloth  
Colander  
Cheese forms (optional, for making logs or other shaped cheeses)

## INGREDIENTS

1 gallon whole goat milk  
1 packet direct-set chèvre starter  
Optional: fresh herbs, roasted garlic, cracked pepper or other flavorings

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat milk to 86 degrees, then remove from heat. Sprinkle packet of starter over heated milk and stir in gently.
2. Cover milk and let sit at room temperature for about 12 hours. An easy method is to mix in the starter in the evening, and proceed to the next step sometime in the morning.
3. At this point, the curds should have separated out of the whey. Line a colander (or cheese forms) with muslin or cheesecloth. With a slotted spoon, ladle the curds gently into the cheesecloth.
4. You can let the curds drain directly in the colander or in your cheese forms. Or you can tie the cloth up into a bag and hang it to drain with the help of gravity. Allow cheese to drain for 6 to 12 hours. The more it drains, the firmer your cheese will be. A chèvre drained for 6 hours will have a cream cheese-like consistency. Chèvre that drains longer is more firm and can be shaped into a ball or log, if you like.
5. If you wish, you can stir in herbs, specialty salts, cracked pepper, roasted garlic, roasted peppers or other flavorings at this stage. Your chèvre will keep in the refrigerator for about a week.

Yield: About 1½ pounds fresh goat cheese



You can hang homemade chèvre in cheesecloth or muslin to drain. PHOTO BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

— TABITHA ALTERMAN

## Did You Know?

Not all milks are created equal. Goat milk contains more butterfat and protein than cow's milk, but less lactose. It's also naturally homogenized, all of which makes it easier for many people to digest.

## RESOURCES

### FIND CHEESEMAKING SUPPLIES

The Cheesemaker  
thecheesemaker.com

Glengarry Cheesemaking and Dairy Supply  
glengarrycheesemaking.on.ca

New England Cheesemaking Supply  
cheesemaking.com

### READ UP

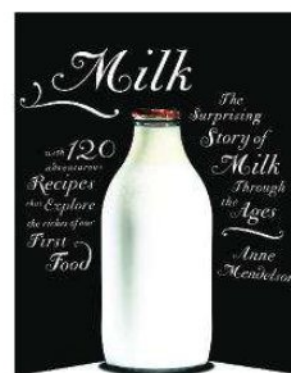
*Cheese Connoisseur* magazine  
cheeseconnoisseur.com

*The Cheesemaker's Manual*  
by Margaret Morris

*Culture* magazine  
culturecheesemag.com

*Hay Fever*  
by Angela Miller

*Milk*  
by Anne Mendelson  
(available at [naturalhome.com/shopping](http://naturalhome.com/shopping))



Every now and then, you read a book that changes your perception of the mundane. Who expects a book about something as provincial as milk to be revolutionary? But this one is. Author Anne Mendelson's key inspiration is delicious flavor, and she arms readers with concrete ways to improve the quality of the food in their fridges—that's as refreshing as a tall glass of cold milk!



# Slow Hand

Piece by salvaged piece, a Boulder carpenter turns a basic box into a sunny, inviting home.



BY ROBYN GRIGGS LAWRENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON





## Greg Miller finds his

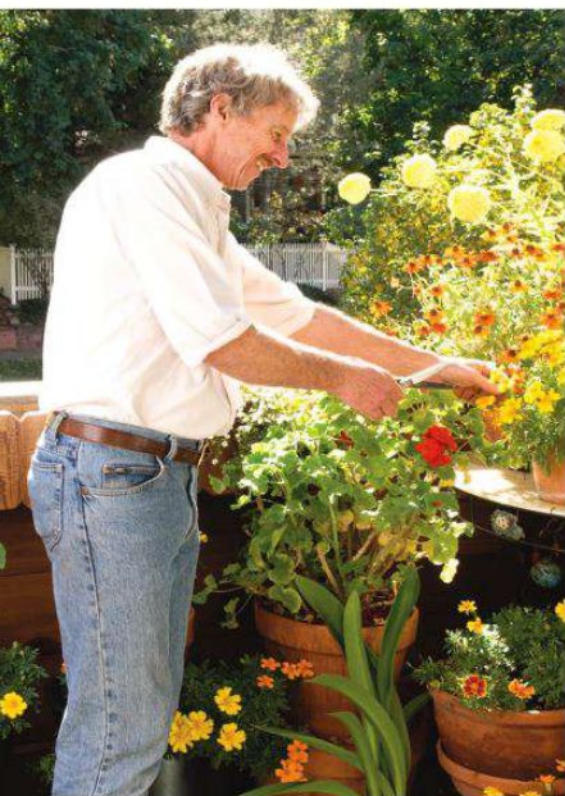
816-square-foot home excessive, though the two-bedroom condo near downtown Boulder, Colorado, barely registers in a town where the average house size is around 6,000 square feet. But Greg's a roving carpenter who once called a 1948 Dodge school bus in the Ohio woods home and who journeyed for six years in a van. To him, 816 square feet feels like too much.

"This is the first normal place I've lived in," Greg says, and sometimes he's overwhelmed by all that square footage. "All we really need is a place that's dry and warm—the basics. You can't be in more than one room at a time. So why have more than one room?"

Greg bought his unassuming condo, just blocks from Boulder's lively farmer's market and Pearl Street Mall and within walking distance of hiking, transportation and entertainment, seven years ago. "It was a basic apartment. I like to take places like that and transform them," he says. "You can do so much when the four walls are already up. All the hard work is already done."

Greg's south-facing living room is bathed in light all day long. He found his furniture in thrift stores and Dumpsters (Boulder college kids throw away some pretty good stuff).





ABOVE: Greg can harvest kale well into October on the sheltered, sunny deck. In winter, he keeps fresh food growing just inside the deck's sliding glass door.

OPPOSITE: Sustainably harvested cabinets, LED under-counter lights and recycled glass tile give the galley kitchen an updated air. Greg opened up a wall to bring in light.

OPPOSITE RIGHT: The bedroom features a beetle-kill pine floor and reclaimed trim and baseboards. The dresser was a thrift-store find.



## TAKING IT SLOW

Greg was able to practice slower, more intuitive carpentry (a method clients don't always appreciate) for his own renovation. He took three years, working mainly during the winter when his business was slow, and often basing his plans on what salvaged materials he found. This work flow suits him. "I'm not a big planner," he says. "I like just letting things evolve."

Greg's goals were to make better use of his space, beef up energy efficiency and bring in more natural light. The condo's large south-facing deck and sliding glass doors, which let sunshine into the living room all day long, were a great start. Elsewhere, Greg cut holes in interior walls to let natural light penetrate dark rooms, and took advantage of every possible nook and cranny to create storage. He insulated around all windows, box sills, exterior plugs and the ceiling; replaced the windows with low-E glass; and installed insulated blinds throughout the home.

Greg's economic and ethical model called for extensive use of salvaged materials and nontoxic finishes. He replaced the carpet with reclaimed oak flooring and found oak window trim, baseboards, newel posts and steps at the local salvage yard. As he replaced materials, he reused or recycled the old ones. (He tried for zero waste, but at the time he was renovating he couldn't find anyone to recycle the old drywall.) When he was finished, he decorated with furniture from local used furniture stores and Dumpsters.





## A Chat with Greg

### What book is on your nightstand?

*The Big Year* by Mark Obmascik; *Alice Cooper, Golf Monster* by Alice Cooper with Keith and Kent Zimmerman

### Favorite thing to do on a spring day?

Get out in nature and watch the spring bird migration.

### Favorite way to spend Friday night?

Going to the Dances of Universal Peace here in Boulder.

### When is your next adventure?

Soon.



[naturalhomemagazine.com](http://naturalhomemagazine.com)

For a video tour of Greg's van—outfitted for an upcoming road trip and filled with ingenious space-saving techniques—visit [naturalhomemagazine.com/greg-miller](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/greg-miller)

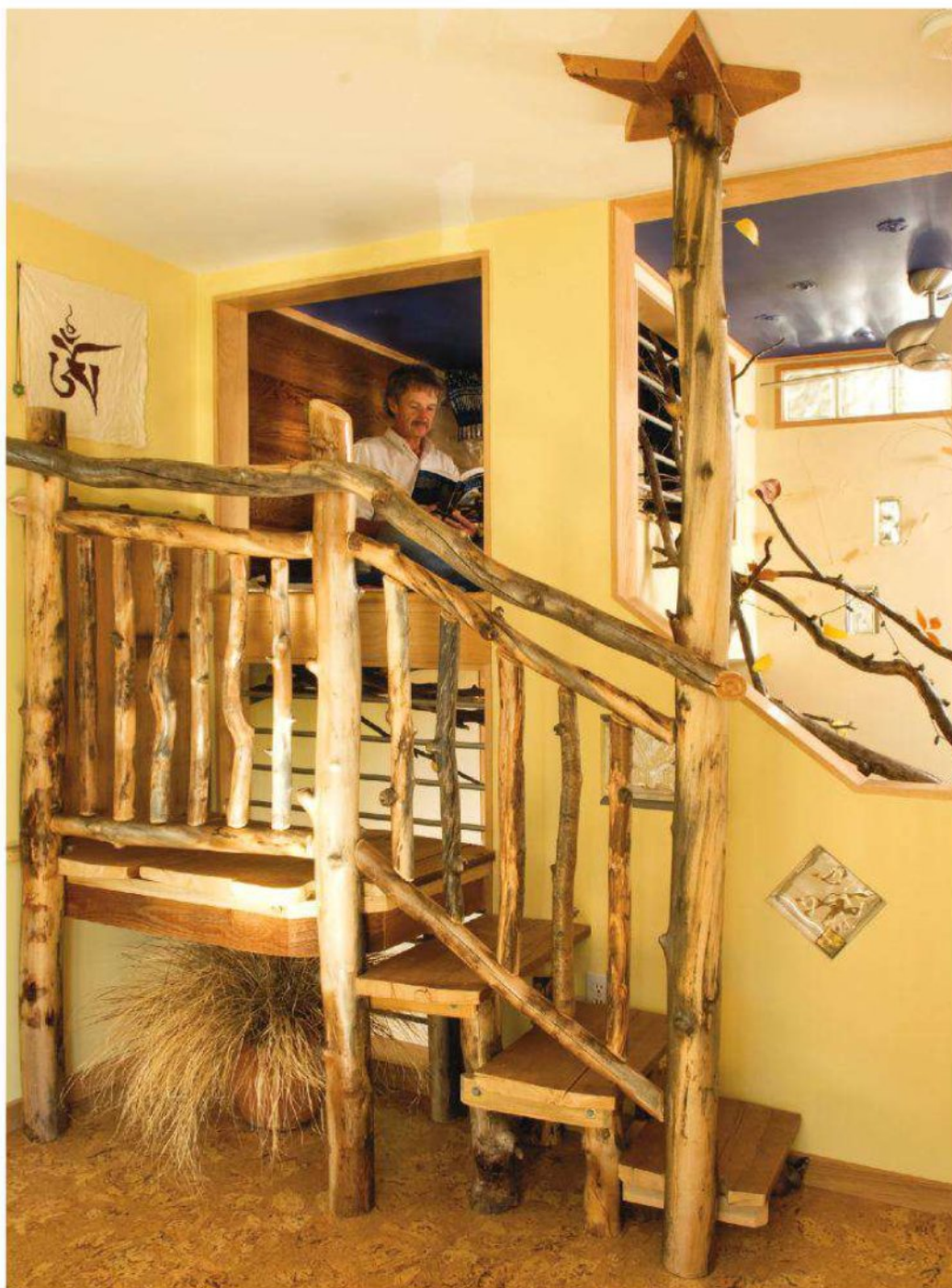






Greg tucked a tiny closet and a sweet spot for breakfast or dinner beneath the stairwell.





In his office, Greg installed a cork floor and built a sleeping/meditation loft using reclaimed cedar, redwood and oak.

### SIMPLE LIVING BY EXAMPLE

Now complete, Greg's comfortable condo is a testament to his simple lifestyle. He doesn't have a microwave, garbage disposal or dryer because he doesn't consider them necessities. "Forty years ago, every home didn't have a dishwasher or a garbage disposal," he says. "Your home is a product of your environment. We have so many comforts."

The small square footage makes the home easy to clean and maintain. It's also affordable. Even before the renovation, the highest utility bill Greg had ever paid was \$55. These days his utility bills average around \$30—he says they aren't substantial enough to track.

"It makes me feel good that I did all the energy things I could do," Greg says. "If everybody would take care of their own home's efficiency, that's really all it would take for the whole system to be more efficient. I love to show people that. It's kind of neat to live by example."

*Natural Home* editor-at-large ROBYN GRIGGS LAWRENCE has been known to drive slowly past Boulder Dumpsters when the college kids leave for the summer.

### RESOURCES

#### DESIGN AND BUILD

**Greg Miller, Builder**  
gregmillerdesign.com

#### Red Pepper Kitchen and Bath

redpepdesign.com  
kitchen and bath design

#### ReSource Boulder

resourceyard.org  
salvaged materials

#### WHOLE HOUSE

**AFM Safecoat**  
afmsafecoat.com  
low-VOC paint, grout sealer,  
floor and trim sealer, caulk

#### Armstrong Air Ultra V

Advantage 80  
armstrongair.com  
80 percent-efficient furnace

#### KITCHEN

**American Loft Cabinetry**  
americanloftcabinetry.com  
custom kitchen cabinet doors

#### Blanco

blancoamerica.com  
low-flow kitchen faucet

#### Forbo

forbo-flooring.com  
natural linoleum

#### Kindred

kindred-sinkware.com  
kitchen sink

#### Oasis Montana

conservrefrigerators.com  
Vestfrost efficient refrigerators

#### Oceanside Glasstile

glasstile.com  
85 percent recycled glass tile

#### 3Form

3-form.com  
recycled plastic cabinet panels

#### BATHROOM

**Delta**  
deltafaucet.com  
low-flow bathroom faucet

#### Kohler

us.kohler.com  
cast-iron vanity sink





## The Salvager's Primer

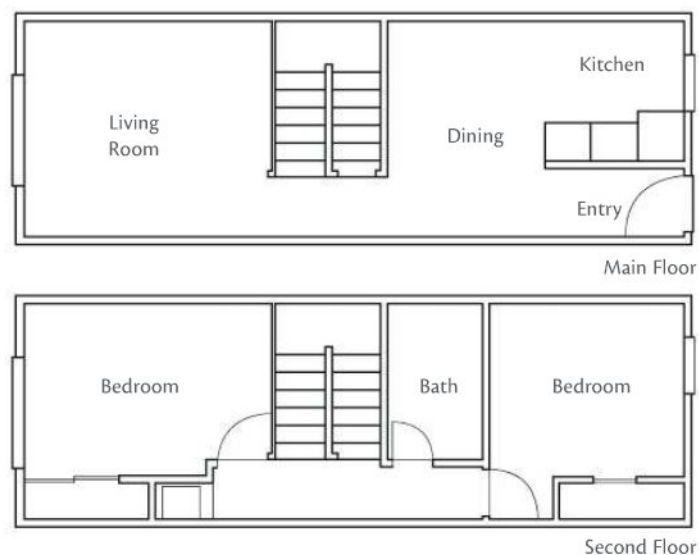
As they've become more popular in recent years, salvaged materials have become easier to find—in salvage yards and resale stores, through classified ads and online.

While you can certainly search online for hard-to-find items, ideally you want to run your hands over weathered wood flooring and study antique doors' quirks and quality before you commit. Locally oriented online sources such as [craigslist.org](http://craigslist.org) and [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) are a good bet, and local green building groups often have directories.

If you're lucky enough to have one within driving distance, a salvage yard is where the magic happens. Salvage yards are treasure troves filled mostly with junk. Be prepared to dig through piles of crusty windows and rusty fixtures before you find what you're looking for. Salvage yards often—but not always—group items by category, but the user-friendliness ends there. Salvaging is dirty. Be on the lookout for rusty nails and tin, and make sure your tetanus shot is up to date. Always check for loose nails before grabbing hold of old wood, and be aware that the paint clinging to that wood might contain lead. You may want to consider wearing a dust mask.

- If you suspect any item has lead paint, don't strip it yourself. Seal it with one of AFM Safecoat's nontoxic sealants to keep the distressed look or paint over the old paint.
- Check all items carefully and be ready to walk away if something's too rotten to resurrect. Avoid the frustration and time sink of attempting to salvage the unsalvageable.
- Check shutters for loose corner joints and broken slats. A few of these may be acceptable if you don't need functional shutters, but too many will look dilapidated.
- Check stone items for cracks and stains; these are almost impossible to fix.
- When salvaging bricks, try to find out when they were fired. Production controls were tightened in the 1940s; bricks made before then aren't as durable.

— Reprinted with permission from *Simply Imperfect: Revisiting the Wabi-Sabi House* by Robyn Griggs Lawrence



TOP AND MIDDLE: The space below the stairs—formerly an awkward, difficult-to-access closet—became a bike garage and clever roll-out storage drawer. The storage area doors are made from reclaimed oak.

BOTTOM: Every nook and cranny is an opportunity for storage. Bookshelves take up otherwise-wasted space at the top of the stairs.





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# 32 Kids

## and Counting



Lori Tigner's desire to live simply has led her to build a thriving farm, a blossoming soap business and a self-reliant lifestyle.

BY BROOKE LINDQUIST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

**Sitting at the table** in her cozy kitchen, Lori Tigner's face glows as she talks about the pure satisfaction of collecting a basket of eggs or a bucket of goat milk. "It's like you've discovered gold," she says. Thanks to Arlo, Christopher, Daisy and the 29 other goats she keeps, Lori's known among folks in the foothills west of Denver as the "Goat Mom." In reality, she's the owner of Westfarm Goats, a 3-acre farm where Lori and her husband live simply raising animals, tending gardens and producing artisan soaps from fresh goat milk.

Lori first got to know goats in the early 1990s when she worked part-time at an Oklahoma museum that kept a couple. "It was love at first sight," she says. "From that moment on, I knew I had to have goats in my life." At the time, Lori was participating in weeklong historic reenactments, and she was captivated by the early 20th century's simplicity. Hoping to bring some of that simplicity into her modern life, she and her then-husband handbuilt a log house with no electricity or plumbing—except cold water in the kitchen sink—on a corner of her grandparents' farm in southeast Colorado. The family referred to it as Westfarm.

ABOVE: Forrest, a 12-year-old with ADHD and sensory processing disorder, visits Westfarm Goats every Saturday to help Lori with her chores. "This is the first time he's ever been able to stick with something," his mother says. "The physical labor, the life lessons, his increased responsibility and confidence—I'm continually blown away."

OPPOSITE: Baby Belle watches eagerly as Lori begins serving dinner.











“When we do what we want to do,  
other people get to see what’s possible.”

— LORI TIGNER

At Westfarm, Lori dug into the simple life, creating a self-reliant homestead. In addition to goats, she kept a donkey, a Jersey milk cow, hogs, sheep, ducks, geese, chickens, peacocks, guineas and turkeys. She spent five years living in the log house, gathering wood, washing all of her clothes by hand, spinning wool, collecting her food from her animals and a garden, and teaching classes at the local community college to cover her few remaining expenses. Eventually, Lori divorced and relocated to her current farm between Morrison and Conifer, Colorado, where she and the goats—and a new husband—continue to build a legacy under the Westfarm banner.

#### LIVING HER SELF-RELIANT DREAM

Lori rises every day before 5 a.m. and eats breakfast, then feeds her 32 goats, two sheep, 12 bantam chickens, 21 hens and two roosters. She milks about six goats, eats a second breakfast, then heads down the mountain to teach at a community college. Upon returning home, she does the evening chores—feeding, milking more goats and collecting eggs—then has supper with her husband and reads or knits before falling into bed.

“I do what I’m passionate about, and I don’t care what other people think,” Lori says. Her dream is self-reliance, and she’s living it. “I love that at the end of the day I can say, ‘I did this. We—the animals and I—we did this.’ I can feed myself and feed my family.” The joy she experiences, whether from something silly the goats have done or from creating a particularly beautiful bar of goat milk soap, keeps her going.

“I think a lot of people are unhappy because they don’t realize how fulfilling it is to be able to do something by yourself,” Lori muses, as she pulls on her boots.

BROOKE LINDQUIST is a Denver-based writer. When she’s not writing or doing yoga, she can be found up on the trails with her dog Hailey.

AT LEFT, CLOCKWISE: Lori’s best milk-producing goat, Avalon, gets a good view from atop a dog carrier that doubles as a baby goat house. Lori collects goat milk to turn into silky soap. Lori says collecting eggs feels like finding a hidden treasure.

RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM: The goats gather quickly when dinner time rolls around. Lori sells her deliciously scented goat milk soap at her local farmer’s market.











## The Dish on Soap

About five years ago, when Lori's goat milk supply surpassed demand, she read a few books, did some experimenting, and created refreshing soaps that work magic on chapped skin. She uses herbs she grows in her garden, honey from a local, mountain producer, high-quality essential oils and olive, sunflower, apricot kernel, rice bran, soybean and coconut oils. She also uses a variety of molds to create soaps that are as much a work of art as a body-care product. Lori loves picking out different molds and designing soaps with seasonal themes. "The fun part is making them look and smell pretty," she says. "It's like a chemistry experiment, figuring out which essential oils work together." Lori sells her soaps online, as well as through her area farmer's markets. She says of her soaps, "Here at the farm we try to live simply. My hope is that our products fit with your lifestyle of living simply, too." Learn more: [westfarmgoats.com](http://westfarmgoats.com)

## RESOURCES

### FURTHER READING

*Living with Goats: Everything You Need to Know to Raise Your Own Backyard Herd* by Margaret Hathaway

*Goats: Small-Scale Herding for Pleasure and Profit* by Sue Weaver

*The Field Guide to Goats* by Cheryl Kimball

*Milk Soapmaking: The Smart and Simple Guide to Making Lovely Soap* by Anne L. Watson

*Home Cheese Making: Recipes for 75 Delicious Cheeses* by Ricki Carroll (available at [naturalhomemagazine.com/shopping](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/shopping))

### WEBSITES

**GoatFinder.com**  
[goatfinder.com](http://goatfinder.com)  
nationwide listing of goats for sale

**Dairy Goat Journal**  
[dairygoatjournal.com](http://dairygoatjournal.com)  
bimonthly magazine on raising goats

**American Goat Society**  
[americangoat.society.com](http://americangoat.society.com)  
registry for all breeds of dairy goats

**American Livestock Breeds Conservancy**  
[albc-usa.org](http://albc-usa.org)  
information on heritage goat breeds

**Raising Goats blog**  
[raising-goats.blog.spot.com](http://raising-goats.blog.spot.com)

**GOAT MILK CHEESE AND SOAP RECIPES**  
"Easy Homemade Soap"  
[grit.com/tools/easy-homemade-soap.aspx](http://grit.com/tools/easy-homemade-soap.aspx)

**"Goats Milk Soap Recipe"**  
[suite101.com/pages/article\\_old.cfm/rural-country\\_living/52076](http://suite101.com/pages/article_old.cfm/rural-country_living/52076)

**"How to Make Goat Cheese and Goat Soap"**  
[keeping-goats.com/Dairy-Goat-make-cheese-soap.html](http://keeping-goats.com/Dairy-Goat-make-cheese-soap.html)

**SEE PAGE 39 FOR A SIMPLE HOMEMADE GOAT CHEESE RECIPE**





# Trickle-Down *Effect*

BY JESSICA KELLNER  
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY  
360 ARCHITECTURE





A corporate-sponsored urban rain garden demonstrates food-growing techniques, renewable energy and stormwater management—all in one square block in downtown Kansas City.

**Kansas City's** historic and now-bustling Crossroads Art District has seen many revitalization efforts over the past decade. But few have offered as many community benefits as the new 18Broadway project, an urban rainwater-harvesting food garden in the heart of downtown—the first of its kind in the country.

Originally conceived to help tackle the city's stormwater and wastewater treatment problems, the garden has evolved to do much more. Volunteers demonstrate gardening techniques in container, raised-bed and in-ground gardens, all watered from an underground 40,000-gallon rainwater-catchment cistern. The cistern is fed by rainwater that's filtered through a street-level bioswale system—a vegetation-filled drainage system that captures and filters rain or other water. The food grown is donated to local food banks, and the entire site is powered by a photovoltaic array and prototype wind turbine.

18Broadway's five garden tiers, including nearly 100 raised beds, produce tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, kale, gourds, pumpkins, onions and more for area food banks. The site is expected to produce 2 to 4 tons of vegetables each growing season.





The 18Broadway grounds and gardens can process 49,000 gallons of rainwater, and the site can store another 40,000 gallons in underground cisterns. The block's 89,000-gallon processing capacity is the equivalent of about a 3.5-inch rainfall.

## WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS

In 2008, financial services technology provider DST Systems was planning to build condominiums on a plot of land at 18th and Broadway, just a few blocks from its headquarters. But a sudden decline in nationwide economic conditions led the company to set aside those plans. DST had already demolished the building that had stood on the site because of structural integrity failures, and the company was left with a large, empty plot of land. "We had this vacant, bare, highly erodible site, and we needed to stabilize it," says DST vice president Steve Taylor. The company turned to its neighbors, 360 Architecture, whose stated mission is to create projects that "enhance the well-being of people, organizations, communities and the environment."

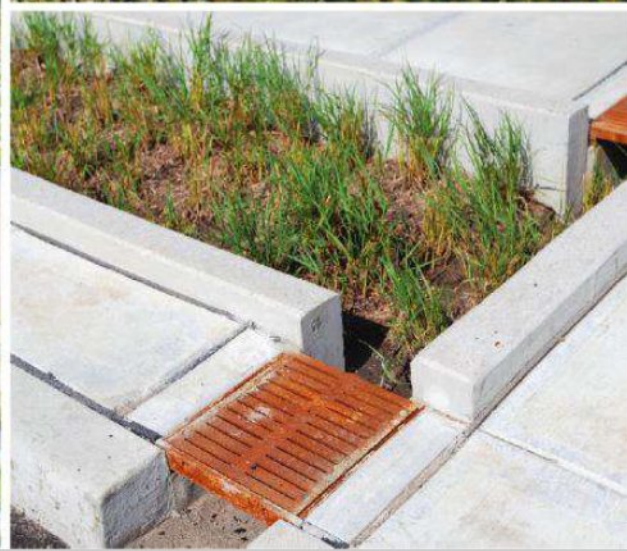
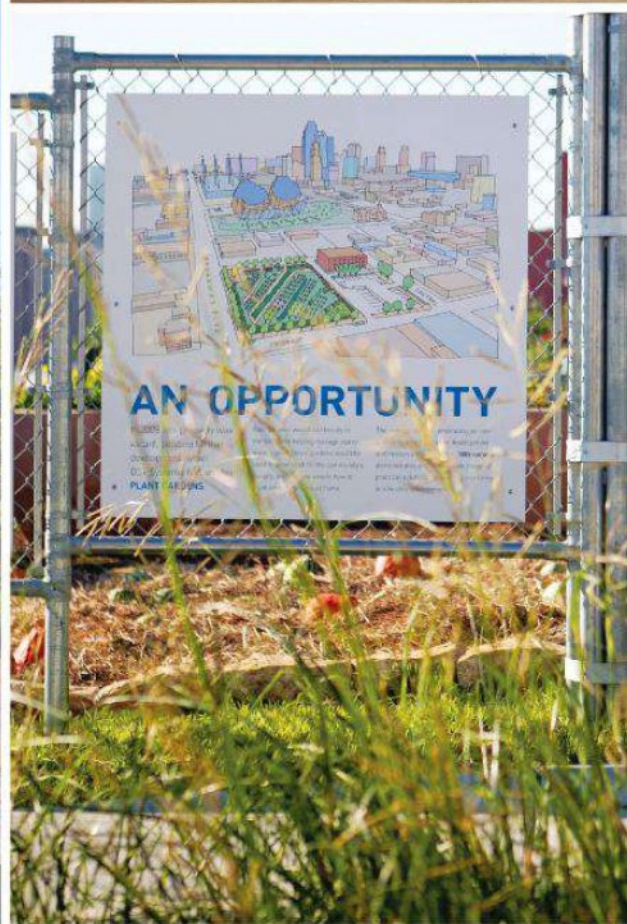
DST envisioned building a series of rain gardens as part of Kansas City's 10,000 Rain Gardens initiative. Because Kansas City's sewage and stormwater runoff systems are linked, large storms overflow the city's water treatment system and send untreated sewage into area waterways. Though the municipality

will invest billions of dollars over the next 25 years to remedy the situation, the citywide 10,000 Rain Gardens initiative is a stop-gap measure to proactively involve individuals and businesses in rainwater management until major renovations are complete.

DST and 360 were determined to showcase how much one city block could affect one big environmental problem—then they realized they could also directly benefit community members and build on DST's history of community gardening by growing food. "Once we started to find a solution, it became a platform for a more expansive idea," Taylor says. For 18 years, DST staff volunteers have been growing food in a garden in the nearby Quality Hill neighborhood and donating it to a local soup kitchen. They decided to expand on the idea at 18Broadway, storing and using rainwater to irrigate food gardens that would produce fresh vegetables for area food banks. "It's a nice synergy with our gardening core and expands our community gardening efforts," Taylor says.

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A prototype wind turbine towers above the garden's permeable pavers and raised garden beds, providing power to pedestrian lights. Gardener and DST employee Kathy Pemberton chose food plants based on what is most popular at food agencies. Peppers and tomatoes often top agency wish lists. "We also kept in mind what would be visually appealing from the street," she says. Graphic panels explain the site to visitors. "We want people not just to see, but to understand," says Gene Lund, project architect at 360 Architecture. Street-level bioswales gulp water running down city streets before it heads to sewers. Planted with native plants and grasses, especially those resistant to damage from heavy metals and salt, the bioswales are modeled after a forest floor.









Though it's only been operational for about half a growing season, 18Broadway has already hosted community educational events. Owner DST Systems plans to continue its community involvement by teaming with area schools and other community groups.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE

18Broadway showcases a range of environmental and social justice solutions. It shows developers how a commercially viable project can easily incorporate a bioswale system that helps save both water and energy for the city. And it displays stormwater management techniques for area homeowners. "Anyone can apply these principles on their street," says Gene Lund, project architect at 360. "You can divert stormwater and get heavy metals off your street before they get to the sewer."

Eventually, DST plans to make good on its intentions of developing the land for residential or commercial use, but the bioswale and stormwater storage systems are designed to remain in place, and the food gardens could be relocated to the rooftop. "It demonstrates for cities and other developers how to integrate stormwater management into future developments," Taylor says.

Managed by DST master gardener and volunteer coordinator Kathy Pemberton and a team of about 12 company volunteers, 18Broadway's first harvest yielded 75 pounds of fresh produce for Harvesters Community Food Network, a local food bank. Food banks are generally hungry for fresh produce, as they often receive grocery store leftovers. When food bank workers put the 18Broadway food out on shelves, "the fresh produce was gone in 12 minutes," Taylor says. The gardeners conservatively estimate that their five-tiered garden, which ultimately will include nearly 100 raised beds, will produce 2 to 4 tons of vegetables each growing season. The gardens display a wide array of techniques for growing food in the city. "It's very scalable," Taylor says. "We have a large palette here, but you could take one or two of the techniques home. We hope Kansas City neighborhoods can benefit from the concepts here at 18Broadway."

Though the garden was completed at the end of the summer of 2010, 18Broadway has already held educational community events and plans to host more this year. DST is also talking with area schools—the garden is across the street from a charter school and a day-care center—about organizing children's gardening projects. Large signs designed by 360's graphic design team, Tilt, explain the site's environmental and community benefits to passersby. "We're very well-lit at night and highly visible," Taylor says. "We're in the shadow of the new performing arts center. There's a lot of opportunity for Kansas Citians to see the site."

A prototype wind turbine feeds the garden's pedestrian lights. Passersby will also see 12 grid-tied GE photovoltaic panels. Calculated to generate about 1,400 kilowatt-hours per year, the panels offset the power used by the garden's pumps, ultraviolet filters and receptacle loads. "We were demonstrating sustainability in water and food. We wanted to bring in energy," Lund says.

DST believes future residents will be eager to move in and even pay a premium for a site so loaded with green spaces. "If we can help the city and the environment, and create beautiful urban spaces that also provide the property owner an economic benefit, everybody wins," Lund says.

*Natural Home* editor JESSICA KELLNER loves common-sense ways we can work with nature to improve our cities and our world.

Learn more: [18broadway.com](http://18broadway.com)



# 18BROADWAY

DST  
SYSTEMS  
[www.18Broadway.com](http://www.18Broadway.com)

## A Toast to Recycling

Standing adjacent to the garden at 18Broadway is a large, purple recycling bin, a symbol of one of Kansas City's other recent eco-minded advancements. Recycling isn't big in Kansas City. Historically, residents have recycled glass at a paltry rate of 5 percent—less than a quarter of the national average of 25 to 30 percent—and the city's curbside recycling program doesn't accept glass. These numbers made local Boulevard Brewing executives John McDonald, Jeff Krum and Mike Utz squirm. Despite their company's penchant for regionalism and waste reduction (its 2006 energy-recovering brewery expansion building features a green roof with a rainwater catchment cistern), it was still responsible for sending about 10 million beer bottles to the landfill each year. Determined to become part of the solution, Boulevard execs collaborated with DST and other leading Kansas City businesses to found Ripple Glass, a "self-contained" metropolitan glass recycling company with big purple bins all across the city. Several hundred tons of glass collected in the bins—including about a ton of glass from Boulevard each week—is delivered to a processing facility for cleaning and crushing. Eliminating the problems associated with transporting heavy glass to the nearest recycling plant in St. Louis, Ripple sells about 85 percent of its glass to Owens Corning, which reuses it in its Kansas City fiberglass insulation production facility. Since its launch in November 2009, Ripple Glass has more than doubled the region's glass recycling. Learn more: [rippleglass.com](http://rippleglass.com)



# W. Reclaiming the Winery

The heir of a long European winemaking tradition, Jean-Charles Boisset brought a chemical-laden vineyard back to life with organic gardening techniques and lots of TLC.

BY KIM WALLACE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARBARA BOU





## When winemaker Jean-Charles Boisset

first visited California's pristine Russian River Valley, he felt an immediate, intimate connection with the land. It reminded him of home. A native of the Burgundy region of France, Jean-Charles was drawn to the valley's flowing river, gorgeous mountains and sumptuous soil. He was so taken with the lush terrain—and its potential for producing world-class wines—that in 2003 he added DeLoach Vineyards, an 18-acre, family-owned estate, to his winemaking family's generations-old repertoire. Potential turned out to be a key word: The vineyards had been polluted by decades of chemical-intense farming practices that had left it lifeless. Jean-Charles called upon his family heritage to revive the tired soil.

The French term *terroir* denotes a particular, site-specific set of flavor qualities that derive from soil, weather and growing practices, and Jean-Charles knew his California land had the potential to create amazing flavors. "When I first visited Sonoma County, I was inspired by the incredible potential of Russian River Valley terroir to grow great pinot noir," Jean-Charles says. "But I knew that in order to make wine that fully expressed the great Russian River Valley, we would first need to restore health to the land."

### DYNAMIC BIODYNAMICS

Jean-Charles' first initiative was to revitalize the chemical-laden soil by reconstructing its ecological harmony. To do this, he turned to biodynamic agriculture, a "beyond organic" farming method developed in the 1920s by Austrian scientist Rudolf Steiner, who also founded the Waldorf schools. Jean-

Charles' faith in biodynamic agriculture stemmed from his upbringing in Burgundy. "My sister and I were taught by our grandparents at a very young age to be stewards of the land," he says. The Boisset family, one of the largest exporters and producers of fine French wine, continues a long tradition of eco-conscious farming in its estate vineyards.

Biodynamic farming's guiding principle is to treat the land as a self-contained, self-sustaining ecosystem that creates and maintains its health and vitality without external or unnatural additions. Soil, plants, farm animals and humans work together to create a holistic, living organism: the thriving biodynamic farm. "What is essential, I think, in biodynamics is the essence of what we call terroir," Jean-Charles says. "And terroir is the definition of the earth, the plant and the climate—in addition to the passion of the individual—really working together."

LEFT: "Earth and Sky," an 18-foot bronze statue, greets winery guests as they enter the DeLoach Vineyards tasting room and organic garden picnic area.

ABOVE: A crate of freshly picked pinot noir grapes awaits transformation into wine.





Writer Kim Wallace helps spray pinot noir grapes with a mix of powdered quartz and water, which acts as a desiccant, absorbing water and preventing fungal growth.

## REBUILDING LIVING SOIL

To heal the land and allow the vineyard to recharge from the ground up, the DeLoach team annually planted cover crops, such as safflower, barley and vetch, that return vital nutrients to the dormant soil. As a result, the soil eventually became rich and lively—almost an entity in itself. “When we talk about respecting our soil, it is really like respecting the insides of our bodies,” Jean-Charles says. “Because the birth, which is that lovely plant we see, is only coming out thanks to what has happened below.”

Below ground, the safflower cover crop’s roots penetrated the sticky clay soil to draw moisture from the nearby Russian River flood plain. Jean-Charles’ team added a combination of natural soil amendments—rock phosphate, lime and biodynamic compost, and a mixture of organic barley straw and hormone-free, local cow manure. They also added herbal “teas” of yarrow, chamomile, nettle, oak, dandelion and valerian.

“Several of those preparations can be used by humans as a homeopathic remedy,” DeLoach Vineyards grower Eric Pooler says. “The change I saw in the vineyard from one year to the next after we began the process was just amazing.”

DeLoach’s formerly stagnant soil transformed into a rich ecosystem that’s now home to eight clones of pinot noir and two clones of chardonnay. Nutritious soil, bountiful water and extra TLC from the team helped the vineyard come to embody the true essence of terroir. While Jean-Charles believes in the power of biodynamic agriculture, he puts even more faith in the collective power of the people who believe in biodynamics. “You cannot have a skeptic on the team,” Jean-Charles says. “They’ve got to feel it. And I know it sounds very spiritually weird, but that osmosis between the human being, the plant, the soil and the terroir has to be an integral part of an overall transformation.”

## Beyond Organic

After a three-year transition, DeLoach Vineyards became one of only 64 vineyards worldwide to receive prestigious Biodynamic certification from Demeter Biodynamic, a third-party certifier. The DeLoach estate vineyards are also certified organic by California Certified Organic Farmers, which is accredited by the USDA National Organic Program. “We view certification not as the destination of our voyage, but as an affirmation that we are moving in the right direction,” DeLoach grower Eric Pooler says. In 2010, organic and biodynamic pinot noir and chardonnay grapes yielded DeLoach’s first estate-grown wines.



## 7 Commandments of Sustainability

DeLoach Vineyards created its own set of rules for sustainable winemaking, vineyard to vessel.

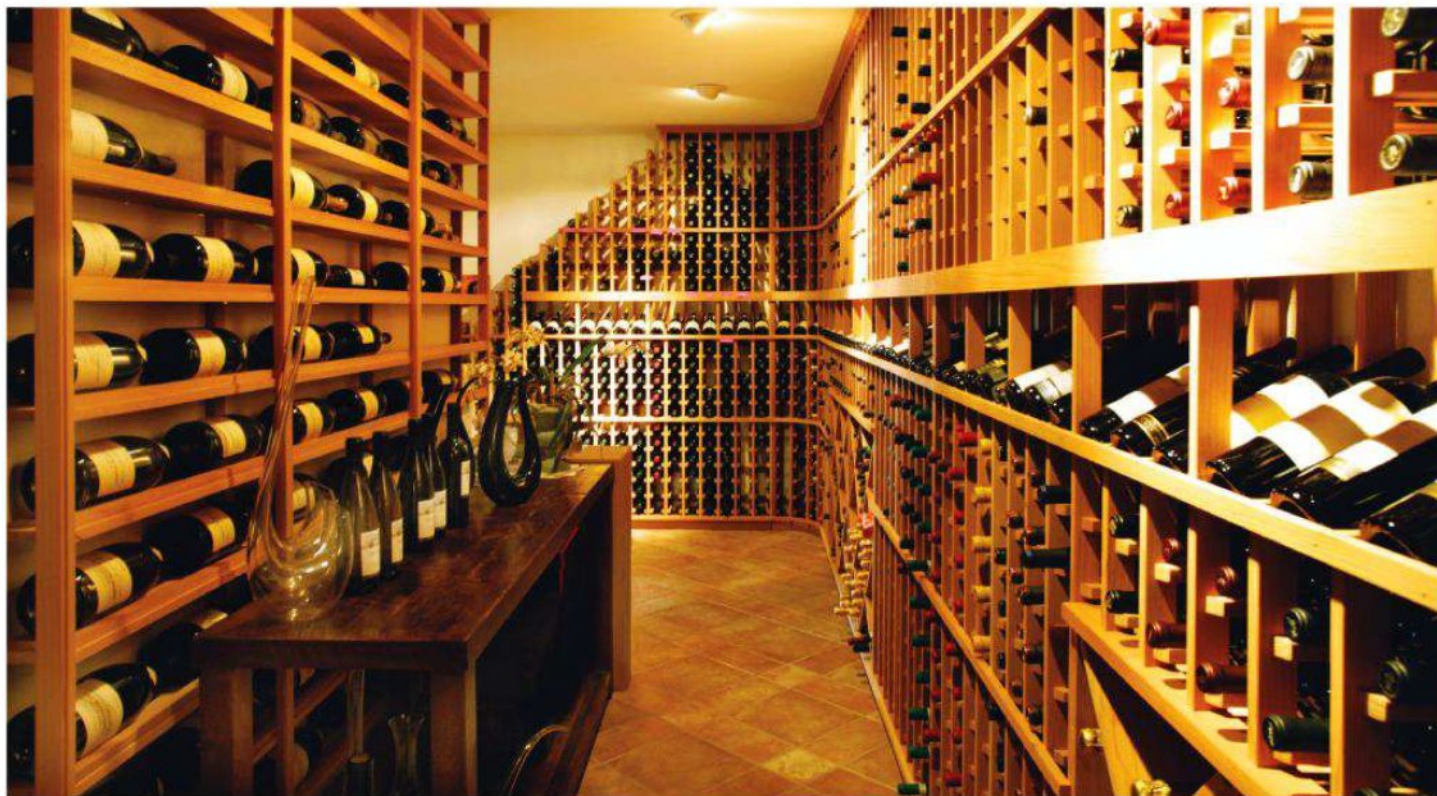
- 1 Invest in renewable energy.** In partnership with Village Green Energy, DeLoach powers its operations with 100 percent renewable energy sources, keeping 314 metric tons of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere each year.
- 2 Recycle cork.** DeLoach encourages customers to recycle all their corks through the ReCORK program by Amorim. The winery provides cork drop-off boxes and delivers corks to the organization, which recycles them into flooring, insulation and other items: [recork.org](http://recork.org).
- 3 Conserve water.** DeLoach was one of the first wineries to implement an innovative membrane bioreactor that relies on microorganisms to purify the water used in winemaking so it can be reused for landscaping and vineyard irrigation. The system, called the Titan MBR, can save up to 2 million gallons of water per year.
- 4 Feed thy neighbor.** The winery's half-acre organic garden provides a bounty of fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs for the vineyard's biodynamic preparations, as well as for winery guests. In addition, DeLoach's organic garden surplus benefits nearby Santa Rosa's food banks and restaurants.
- 5 Teach the willing.** DeLoach encourages other vineyards to adopt sustainable farming practices. It offers technical support as well as financial incentives to help partner vineyards eliminate synthetic chemicals and become certified by trusted third-party agencies.
- 6 Share a barrel.** With its Barrel to Barrel program, DeLoach eliminates unnecessary packaging for large wine quantities by delivering big orders in plastic bags and small wooden barrels, reducing packaging by 99 percent compared with glass. The bags hold 67 five-ounce glasses of wine—about 13 bottles.
- 7 Prioritize reuse.** When DeLoach remodeled its estate, old doors, windows and tiles found new homes, and reclaimed wood from old DeLoach wine vats was used to build new cabinets. DeLoach insulated the winery's walls with recycled denim jeans and created a welcome sign from wood recycled from the old Levi Strauss factory in nearby San Francisco.

TOP: A vineyard visitor picks greens from a garden bed.

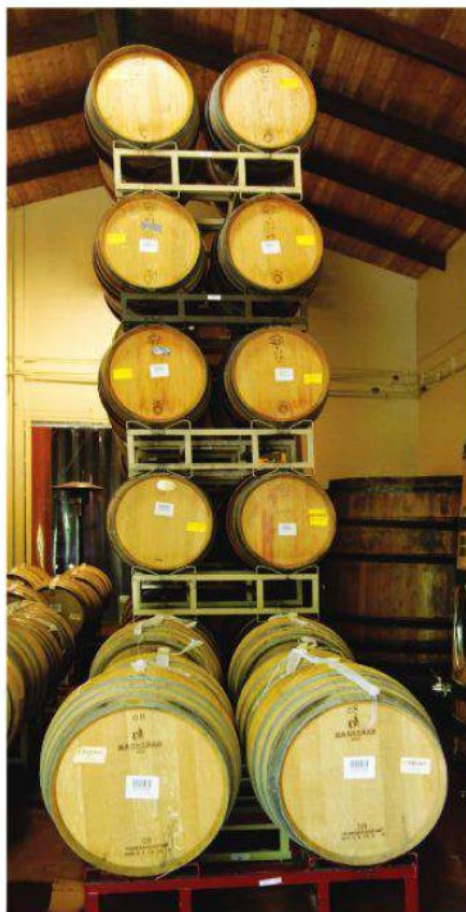
BOTTOM: Winegrower Eric Pooler demonstrates his method of mixing Biodynamic Prep 501, a mixture of crushed quartz and water.







DeLoach stores hundreds of bottles in its extensive wine cellar. Guests can enjoy them through group or private wine tastings, winery tours, picnics and group dinners.



ABOVE: DeLoach uses traditional, small French oak fermentors and Old World winemaking techniques.

OPPOSITE: In the DeLoach picnic area, guests enjoy chardonnay and fresh-picked garden greens.

## Drinking DeLoach

A 10-time *Wine & Spirits* "Winery of the Year," DeLoach Vineyards produces a full range of affordable, delicious wines that express the terroir of Sonoma County's Russian River Valley. Known best for its pinot noir, chardonnay and zinfandel, DeLoach Vineyards offers three tiers of wines for enthusiasts and casual drinkers.

**1 Vineyard Designate Series:** These limited-production wines are crafted from some of the Russian River Valley's most acclaimed vineyards. Visit the DeLoach tasting room or join the wine club to experience some. Try the Zinfandel Nova Vineyard 2007, \$32, for dark berry flavors coupled with notes of chocolate and spice.

**2 OFS Series:** "Our Finest Selection" is just that—DeLoach's most prized wines bottled in years when the winemaker believes grape quality is extraordinary. The Tawny Red Wine, \$32, blends equal parts zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon and petite sirah to create intoxicating aromas of black cherry, plum and white chocolate with notes of cardamom spice. Linger with close friends over a bottle of this complex wine—as afternoon turns to evening, this wine opens up even more to reveal intricate hints of other delicious flavors.

**3 Russian River Valley:** DeLoach's flagship series of award-winning, affordable wines represents the winery's heart and soul. The red berry and anise aromas of Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2008, \$24, will complement your next mushroom or red-meat meal. For dessert, grab a Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2007, \$18, and savor this smooth, creamy chardonnay's scents of Asian pear and warm apple pie.

KIM WALLACE is a freelance writer and editor who believes in the power of an oversized glass of pinot noir.

WINERY RESOURCES: PAGE 88

Learn more: [deloachvineyards.com](http://deloachvineyards.com)







# *The Easy-Breezy, Breathing-Easy* Cleaning Arsenal

With just 15 simple, inexpensive grocery-store ingredients, you can clean every part of your home without chemicals or packaging waste.



BY MINDY PENNYBACKER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON



Get clean for spring with nontoxic basics such as vinegar and essential oils.

## The labels

on most household products read like the periodic table violently collided with a bowl of alphabet soup. What are those ingredients, and what might they do to our homes, our pets and our loved ones? A foolproof way to know what's in your cleaning products is to make them yourself. It's easy and economical, with the added benefit of reducing your household's carbon footprint by creating less packaging waste and less pollution from manufacturing and shipping.

### WING IT!

Feel free to improvise with proportions; none of these recipes are set in stone. When it comes to making soft scrubs, I find myself mixing until the right texture is achieved. It's like cooking a favorite recipe—rely on instinct and use trial and error to refine. The fun part is trying out essential oils to find your preferred fragrance. DIY cleaning will soon become second nature, and your home will look, feel and smell naturally fresh.

### Ditch the Toxins

Avoid these toxic ingredients when buying cleaning products:

- |                           |                          |                         |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ Alkylphenol ethoxylates | ■ Nonylphenol ethoxylate | ■ Triclosan and other   |
| ■ Ammonia                 | ■ Sodium laureth sulfate | antibacterial agents    |
| ■ Chlorine                | ■ Sodium lauryl sulfate  | (phenols, formaldehyde, |
| ■ Glycol ethers           | ■ Synthetic fragrance    | petroleum solvents,     |
| ■ Lye                     | ■ Terpenes               | perchloroethylene,      |
|                           |                          | butyl cellosolve)       |

## Shopping List

With these 15 items, you can clean just about anything.

- ☐ BAKING SODA: scrubbing, whitening
- ☐ BEESWAX: polishing wood
- ☐ BORAX (sodium borate): removing stains/disinfecting
- ☐ CLUB SODA (or any unflavored fizzy water): lifting stains
- ☐ CORNSTARCH: absorbing stains
- ☐ HYDROGEN PEROXIDE: disinfecting, removing stains
- ☐ LEMON: removing stains and odors
- ☐ LIQUID DISH SOAP: sudsing power
- ☐ OLIVE OIL: polishing wood
- ☐ PINE OIL: cleaning soft wood floors
- ☐ PLANT ESSENTIAL OILS: chemical-free fragrance (do a sniff test before buying to make sure you're not sensitive to the fumes)
- ☐ SALT: scrubbing
- ☐ TOOTHPASTE: polishing metal
- ☐ WASHING SODA (sodium carbonate): scrubbing, removing stains and cutting grease
- ☐ WHITE VINEGAR: disinfecting, removing stains



## Un-Dirty Dozen: 12 Easy Cleaners

Remember, even all-natural cleaning ingredients can be irritating. Open windows to ventilate rooms while you clean, and wear gloves. Store homemade cleaners in sealed containers in a cool, dry place.

### CARPETS AND DRAPES

Attack fresh stains and spills right away by covering them with absorbent baking soda or cornstarch. Leave for 10 to 15 minutes, then sprinkle with club soda (the fizz helps lift stains), and vacuum and/or blot. Do not rub fresh stains, which can spread them, or use hot water, which can set them.

To clean carpets and drapes, get rid of surface dirt by vacuuming, hanging, shaking out and, if necessary, beating with a broom handle. Next, presoak stains with the solutions below, depending on the type of fabric, for 30 minutes, taking care to spot-test fabric for colorfastness first.

- For wool or silk, use equal parts cold water and white vinegar or lemon juice.
- For cotton, linen or synthetic fabrics, use equal parts cold water mixed with hydrogen peroxide, baking or washing soda, or borax.

Following spot removal, wash drapes or area rugs in cold water with liquid soap, old soap bar slivers or natural laundry soap. Because agitation and heat can damage delicate fabrics, wash wool, silk and rayon by hand in a sink or on the gentle cycle of your washer, then hang dry. If you have wall-to-wall carpet, vacuum, then steam-clean using water with a few drops of liquid soap, or simply wipe the entire surface with hot soapy water on a wrung-out rag, sponge or mop, taking care not to let water soak in. A wet carpet can easily grow mildew and mold.

### TOILET BOWL

Scrub with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of borax to brighten and disinfect. For daily maintenance, brush the bowl with baking soda and let it sit for a bit before flushing. Add white vinegar for a little extra stain-lifting fizz.

### ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER

Use on any non-wood surface.

**$\frac{1}{2}$  cup borax**

**1 gallon hot water**

Mix until borax is dissolved; mop or spray and wipe surfaces.

### FLOOR AND WALL CLEANER

Use this on any floor, including wood, and on walls.

**1 cup white vinegar**

**1 gallon hot water**

**1 tablespoon to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid soap (optional)**

**1 to 2 tablespoons pine or lemon oil (optional)**

For extra cleaning power, add liquid soap. Add pine or lemon oil (essential oil of lavender or rosemary are less-intense alternatives) to condition unlaminated wood floors. Mix all ingredients and clean floor or walls with mop or damp rag. Follow with a clean-water mop if you use soap.

### GLASS CLEANER

Shine on without toxic ammonia-based products.

**$\frac{1}{4}$  cup white vinegar or**

**1 tablespoon lemon juice**

**2 cups water**

**3 to 4 drops liquid soap (optional)**

Mix and spray or wipe on; for the best shine, use old newspapers!

### ENCRUSTED GUNK BUSTER

Avoid chlorine-based scrubs by making your own scrubbing bubbles.

**Baking soda, washing soda or salt**

Wipe surface with hot water; sprinkle on soda or salt. Let sit for a few minutes, then scrub with a rag, sponge or brush.



Coarse salt provides excellent scrubbing power for cooked-on stains or dirty bathtubs.



### FUME-FREE OVEN CLEANER

Avoid caustic lye-based products and still make your oven sparkle.

**1 cup baking soda**  
**¼ to ½ cup washing soda**  
**1 tablespoon liquid soap**  
**Hot water**  
**Few drops white vinegar**

Make sure oven is off and totally cool. No need to disconnect power. Wipe off surface soot and any fresh spills. Combine dry ingredients and gradually add hot water until you have a thick but malleable paste. For greasy ovens, add an additional ¼ cup washing soda. Add vinegar (watch it fizz!). Coat all oven surfaces and leave overnight. Wipe off with warm water.

### SOFT SCRUB

Use this non-scratching, chlorine-free paste on enamel or porcelain.

**1 cup baking soda or borax**  
**Warm water**  
**2 to 3 drops liquid soap**

Combine baking soda or borax with enough water to form a paste. Add liquid soap. Apply to surfaces, let sit at least 5 minutes, and scrub with a non-abrasive sponge. Rinse and wipe off residue.

### GROUT CLEANER

Kill mildew and whiten grout without chlorine.

**Baking soda**  
**White vinegar or hydrogen peroxide**

Combine ingredients to make a paste. Let stand 30 minutes or more, then scrub.



Just a spoonful of baking soda whitens and brightens.

### LYE-FREE DRAIN CLEANER

For a clogged drain, use a plumber's snake or an untwisted coat hanger to pull out as much gunk as possible. Pour ½ cup baking or washing soda down the drain; gradually add ½ cup white vinegar. Let fizz and dissolve. Carefully pour in boiling water from a tea kettle. Wait half an hour. Repeat as necessary. Before calling a plumber, let things cool off and snake again.

### GERM KILLER

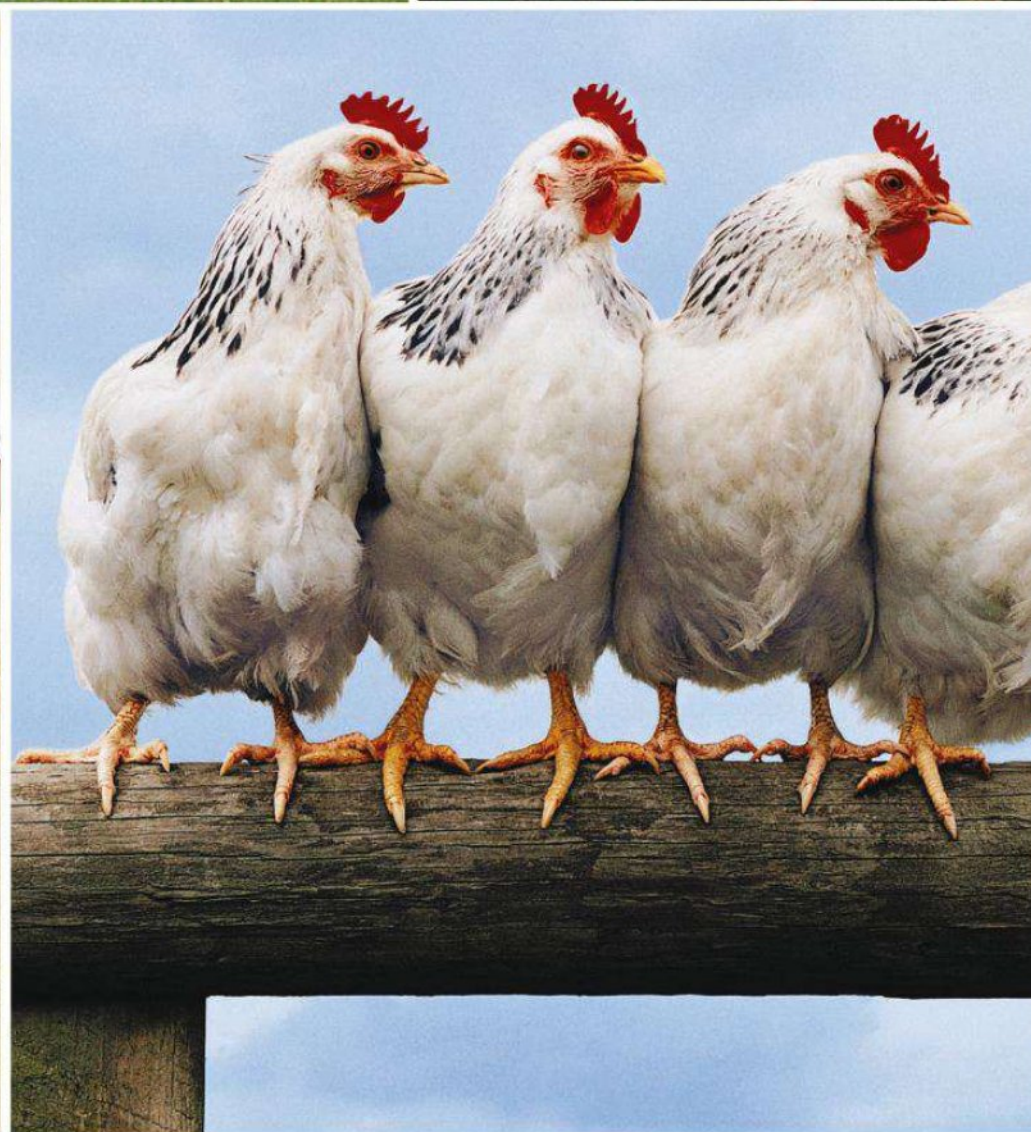
Avoid cleaners with chlorine bleach and toxic antibacterial agents such as triclosan and triclocarban. The American Medical Association advises against using antibacterial products because they may not be any more effective than regular soap, and they promote the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. A wipe-down with white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide provides adequate disinfecting for kitchen and bathroom surfaces—and don't forget door handles. Remember, the best way to get rid of germs is plain soap and hot water!

### THE REAL DEAL AIR FRESHENER

Many commercial air fresheners contain hormone-disrupting chemicals such as phthalates. The healthiest alternative: fresh air! Open the windows. Place an odor-absorbing dish of baking soda or borax on kitchen and bathroom counters out of reach of children and pets. Make your own potpourri by drying flower petals and herbs; these absorb odors and replace them with their own natural scent.

MINDY PENNYBACKER is the author of *Do One Green Thing: Saving the Earth Through Simple, Everyday Choices*. Get her green-cleaning tips and more at [greenerpenny.com](http://greenerpenny.com).









# What the Cluck!

## RAISE SOME CHICKENS

Backyard chickens are fun pets that provide fresh eggs, eat pests and recycle food waste. Raising chickens in the yard is a cinch. Here's how.

BY DEBORAH HUSO

### Nicki Trench loves her backyard chickens

because of the fresh eggs they provide, but also because they're fun. "There is such a difference between eating a freshly laid egg and a storebought egg," she says. "Fresh eggs taste better." Author of *Creating Your Backyard Farm*, Trench loves to watch her Buff Orpington chickens running and wobbling from one end of her garden to the other searching for food or jumping in the air to chase a fly. "They make me smile each day," she says. "Chickens are definitely great mood enhancers."

Tom Potisk has been raising chickens in his Milwaukee backyard since 1995. "I've always enjoyed natural and organic food," he says. "Fresh eggs have nutrients, such as omega-3s, from the chickens eating grass and bugs." For Potisk, the author of *Whole Health Healing*, raising Araucana chickens is a family affair. His three children, ages 10, 12 and 14, help care for the chickens and collect their eggs. "Araucanas are non-aggressive and easy to work with," he says.

If you've been dreaming of fresh eggs but think you can't have your own chickens because you live in the city or suburbs, think again. Less than a century ago, when more people raised their own food, keeping a few chickens in the yard was common in cities,

and plenty of city ordinances still allow the practice. Raising chickens ensures you know where your eggs come from, and collecting eggs fulfills an instinct to provide our own food, Trench says. "It beats going to the supermarket any day," she says.

Chickens also make great garden and recycling assistants. They provide fertilizer, eat pests, and help dig over your vegetable patch at the end of the season. Chickens eat biodegradable kitchen garbage like rusted lettuce, tomato tops and corn husks. Trench says her chickens love pasta and rice. "You'll get to know their favorite items," she says. "You'll find your garbage will be less than half the size once you start keeping chickens."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Many heritage breeds have natural foraging abilities, keeping yards pest-free. Choose docile breeds if you have or live near children (see "Pick Up Chicks" on page 72). Chickens make amusing pets. Nicki Trench raises fluffy Buff Orpington hens.





## BUILD YOUR BROOD

Hobbyists, foodies and families across the country are raising chickens in their city, suburban and farmhouse backyards. With some basic research, you can jump on the chicken bandwagon.

**Research breeds.** Some breeds are better equipped to lay eggs, while others are raised for meat. Different breeds have different laying schedules. For example, most heritage breeds lay more eggs in spring and summer, whereas hybrids (a combination of two or more breeds) can lay year-round. You don't need a rooster unless you want to hatch chicks.

**Consider your surroundings.** Choose less aggressive breeds if you have children. Consider a less-vocal breed if you have nearby neighbors. See "Pick Up Chicks" below for a quick breed guide, or visit the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy ([albc-usa.org](http://albc-usa.org)) for extensive breed information. Our sister publication *Grit* magazine offers a "Pickin' Chicken" iPhone app: [grit.com/feather-brained/pickin-chicken](http://grit.com/feather-brained/pickin-chicken).

**Talk to other chicken keepers in your area.** They can offer tips to keep your chickens safe from foxes, hawks, raccoons and other predators. See "Join Our Coop" at right for ways to connect.

**Prepare a coop.** Get instructions to build your own coop, or buy a premade one: [backyardchickens.com](http://backyardchickens.com); [diychickencoops.com](http://diychickencoops.com).

**Order your chicks!** Many hatcheries will ship chicks to your post office, but it's best to choose a local hatchery. To find a hatchery near you: [cacklehatchery.com](http://cacklehatchery.com), [healthychicksandmore.com](http://healthychicksandmore.com) or [motherearthnews.com/Find-Chickens-Poultry-Hatchery.aspx](http://motherearthnews.com/Find-Chickens-Poultry-Hatchery.aspx).

**Keep it clean.** "There are very few risks of you or your family catching any diseases from a chicken," Trench says. Clean your coop once a week wearing a dust mask, and scoop out droppings each morning with a small shovel, wearing rubber gloves (composted droppings make for a great garden soil amendment).

## CHECK THE LAWS

Before purchasing chickens, check your city's laws with your local zoning office. If you rent, also check with your landlord.

Here are a few issues to consider:

- Can I raise chickens where I'm located?
- How many chickens can I have? Some cities limit the number of chickens you can own depending on the size of your yard, and most cities won't let you keep roosters.
- Is there a certain place the coop should be located?
- How much space will the chickens need?
- Will I be able to use all of the chicken manure and spent bedding in my yard or garden? If not, where will I be able to donate/dispose of it?



## Pick Up Chicks

Heritage breeds offer natural foraging abilities, increased longevity, self-sufficiency and disease-resistance.

### CHANTECLER

**Attributes:** Lays 120 to 180 large brown eggs a year; calm, gentle and personable; developed to withstand harsh winter climates

**Appearance:** White or partridge colored with yellow flesh and legs; almost no wattle

**History:** The only breed ever developed in Canada

**Status:** Critical



### DOMINIQUE

**Attributes:** Lays 230 to 275 medium brown eggs a year; easy keeping nature; natural foraging abilities

**Appearance:** Medium-sized with black and white barred coloring; tightly arranged plumage

**History:** The first chicken breed developed in the United States

**Status:** Watch



### JAVA

**Attributes:** Lays up to 150 dark brown eggs a year; calm, sociable, seldom aggressive; great meat chicken

**Appearance:** Three varieties: black, mottled and white; known for its rectangular body and long, sloping back

**History:** Considered the second-oldest breed of chicken developed in the United States

**Status:** Threatened



### RHODE ISLAND RED

**Attributes:** Lays 200 to 300 brown eggs a year; docile and friendly; known for vigor and ability to produce eggs under marginal conditions; excellent meat chicken

**Appearance:** Rich, deep-red distinctive plumage

**History:** Named the Rhode Island official state bird in 1954

**Status:** Recovering



—Courtesy American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, [albc-usa.org](http://albc-usa.org)





## Join Our Coop

Last year, *Natural Home's* sister publications *Mother Earth News* and *Grit* launched the Community Chickens website, where you can find chicken-raising information, blogs, forums, expert advice, photos, resource listings and more: [communitychickens.com](http://communitychickens.com). For a city-by-city list of regulations for keeping chickens, visit [motherearthnews.com/eggs/city-chicken-regulations.aspx](http://motherearthnews.com/eggs/city-chicken-regulations.aspx).

Kippen House coops are custom-designed, handmade and feature "living roof" gardens. They're available in the Seattle area: [kippenhouse.com](http://kippenhouse.com). Learn to make your own coop at [diychickencoops.com](http://diychickencoops.com).



## Healthier Eggs, It's True!

Testing by *Mother Earth News* in 2007 and 2008 determined that, compared with the USDA's nutrient data for commercial eggs, eggs from pasture-raised hens contain:

- ½ less cholesterol
- ¼ less saturated fat
- ⅔ more vitamin A
- 2 times more omega-3 fatty acids
- 3 times more vitamin E
- 7 times more beta-carotene
- 4 to 6 times as much vitamin D

Read more: [motherearthnews.com/eggs.aspx](http://motherearthnews.com/eggs.aspx)



# De-Plasticize Your Life

In everything from our food-storage containers and shampoo bottles to our flooring and kids' toys, plastic is pervasive. But with a few simple steps, you can get harmful plastics out of your life for good.

BY ALLI KINGFISHER AND KELLY LERNER





**WHEN WE ORDERED** a pot of stress-reducing green tea at a cafe in Spokane, Washington, we were surprised when it arrived in plastic tea bags. The food-grade nylon, highly stable to 400 degrees, wasn't likely to leach anything toxic into our tea, but we had to wonder why the company chose environmentally harmful plastic over one of the natural materials that have been used to steep tea for centuries. Plastic is pervasive—it's even part of our afternoon tea. We've found, however, that you can minimize its negative effects by understanding which types are harmful and seeking out the easy-to-find alternatives.

### THREE PLASTICS TO AVOID

#3 PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic is used to make toys, shower curtains, IV bags, medical tubes, vinyl flooring and wallpaper. Phthalates (also known as plasticizers) are added to soften PVC. Phthalates are also used as solvents in shampoo, nail polish and hair spray. Research shows phthalates can leach out of these products and enter the human body, where they can cause endocrine disruption, reduced sperm counts, testicular atrophy and liver cancer.

#6 PS (polystyrene), made of petroleum byproducts, is commonly used for meat trays, foam food containers and Styrofoam. PS can leach carcinogens and hormone disruptors, contributing to infertility and cancer, and its production requires carcinogens and ozone layer-depleting compounds. Because PS is so light and unsinkable (it's 98 percent air), it is easily carried by wind and is a main component of marine debris.

#7 is the plastic code for "other" and comprises many plastics, but the most common type of #7 is polycarbonate with added bisphenol-A (BPA), used to make reusable food containers, CDs, DVDs, sunglasses and car parts, among numerous other products. Also used in the lining of canned food products, BPA has the potential to break down quickly when heated or washed with a strong detergent. Trace amounts of BPA have been linked to disruptions in the endocrine system, impaired brain and neurological functions, cancer, early puberty, obesity and chemotherapy resistance. Young children and infants are at higher risk. >>

#### Plastic is...

- made from petroleum and chemicals toxic to human and animal health.
- energy-intensive to manufacture, consuming nonrenewable resources and emitting CO<sub>2</sub>.
- difficult to recycle and is usually "down-cycled" into a less useful type.
- often sent to the landfill as solid waste.


ALLI KINGFISHER, a state of Washington green building and sustainability specialist, is plotting to green her 1906 home in Spokane. KELLY LERNER, a Spokane-based architect specializing in healthy, super-energy-efficient homes, is co-author of *Natural Remodeling for the Not-So-Green Home*. See her work at [one-world-design.com](http://one-world-design.com).

## 8 Ways to Avoid Plastic

- 1 Buy and store food in glass containers.
- 2 Try not to buy items in plastic packaging, and take your own cloth bag to the market.
- 3 Avoid polycarbonate drinking bottles with BPA and aluminum bottles with liners containing BPA. (BPA-free water bottles almost always say so on the label.)
- 4 Most canned food liners contain BPA. Support the few companies that don't use BPA (find a list: [naturalhomemagazine.com/plastics](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/plastics)), and contact canned food manufacturers to let them know you won't buy BPA-lined cans.
- 5 Don't give plastic teethingers or toys to infants and young children.
- 6 Avoid storing fatty foods such as meat and cheese—more likely to absorb leached chemicals—in plastic.
- 7 Never heat food in plastic containers. A "microwavable" label on a plastic container only means it won't melt, crack or fall apart—not that it's safe for human health.
- 8 If you do use plastic containers, don't put them in the dishwasher. Handwash them gently with nonabrasive soap.



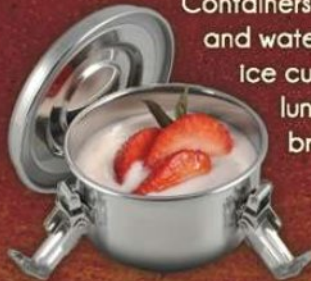
**GO**  
PLASTIC  
FREE!



**Life Without Plastic**

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Containers for food and water, dishes, ice cube trays, lunch bags, brushes ...



[www.LifeWithoutPlastic.com](http://www.LifeWithoutPlastic.com)  
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## HEALTH BE WELL

### Plastic by Numbers

Turn a plastic container over to find its recycling code, which indicates the type of resin used to create the plastic.



**PET OR PETE (POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE), ALSO KNOWN AS POLYESTER**

**Typical Uses:** Water and soft drink bottles; prepared salad and spinach containers

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Intended for single use—plastic can break down and host bacteria; potential to interfere with reproductive hormones



**HDPE (HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE)**

**Typical Uses:** Opaque milk jugs; cereal box liners; liquid detergent bottles; most shampoo bottles

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Low risk of leaching



**PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)**

**Typical Uses:** Plastic wrap, cooking oil bottles, toys, plumbing pipes, window and door frames, insulation (PVC foam)

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Known as the “toxic plastic”; can cause endocrine disruption, reduced sperm count, testicular atrophy and liver cancer



**LDPE (LOW-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE)**

**Typical Uses:** Plastic wrap; grocery, garbage and sandwich bags

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Not known to leach chemicals



**PP (POLYPROPYLENE)**

**Typical Uses:** Yogurt and margarine tubs; microwavable meal trays; fiber for carpets, wall coverings and vehicle upholstery

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Hazardous during manufacture but not known to leach chemicals



**PS (POLYSTYRENE)**

**Typical Uses:** Styrofoam cups; clamshell containers; foam meat trays; plastic cutlery; electronics packaging; insulation

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** Eye, nose and throat irritant; stored in body fat; can cause cancer in production workers; harmful to marine life



**PC (POLYCARBONATE), PLA (POLYLACTIDE) AND ANY OTHER PLASTIC NOT INCLUDED IN CATEGORIES ABOVE**

**Typical Uses:** Baby bottles; some reusable water bottles; stain-resistant food-storage containers

**Health & Environmental Impacts:** BPA-containing polycarbonate causes endocrine and reproductive system disruption; impaired neurological functions; cancer; cardiovascular system damage; early puberty; obesity; chemotherapy resistance



# why green?



**Monica Pedersen**

DESIGNIN**Green** Leader

*Some personal faves...*

Dessert: Mom's Lemon Squares  
(always on a doily)

Book: Andre Agassi's autobio

City: Chicago (Cubs fan!)

Furniture: Comfortable Baker sofa  
reupholstered 3 times

Color: **Green**

*"A way to respect our most pure  
and beautiful design inspiration,  
the planet Earth."*

# why not?

Where to find real **green**

 **sustainable**  
FURNISHINGS COUNCIL  
[sustainablefurnishings.org](http://sustainablefurnishings.org)

For free directions to hundreds of green sources visit [www.sustainablefurnishings.org](http://www.sustainablefurnishings.org)



# Your Home's 10 Germiest Places

Germs, bacteria and viruses are everywhere. Most are harmless, some cause runny noses, and 1 to 2 percent could lead to life-threatening infections. Our advice? Worry less, learn more. Once you know the 10 most common places germs linger in your home, you can take simple steps to eliminate them.



**1 SPONGES AND RAGS.** When you wipe down a dish or counter, you're simply transferring bacteria from one place to another. Wash sponges and rags with soap and hot water between uses or replace these items often; wash your hands after touching sponges. Zapping a wet sponge in the microwave for four minutes will kill most disease-causing germs. The sponge will be hot, so be careful when removing it from the microwave.

**2 CUTTING BOARDS.** Use caution if you cut different types of food on the same board—salmonella, staph and E. coli are commonly transmitted this way. Don't chop vegetables or other ready-to-eat foods on a cutting board used to trim meat, poultry or fish. Wash boards thoroughly after each use. A good scrubbing with dish detergent and hot water will do the trick; you also can wipe the boards clean with undiluted white vinegar. Replace boards that become deeply scratched.

**3 KITCHEN SURFACES.** Just because the countertop looks clean doesn't mean it is. Viruses and bacteria are invisible to the human eye. Spray down countertops with a solution of equal parts warm water and white vinegar and wipe dry using a soft cloth. Thoroughly clean the faucet, sink and knobs, too.





**4 DOORKNOBS.** When you touch a doorknob, you touch the hand of everyone who was there before you. Wash your hands after touching a public doorknob, and regularly clean your own doorknobs with a nontoxic all-purpose cleaner (store-bought or homemade) diluted in hot water.



**5 TOOTHBRUSHES.** Brushing transfers plaque, bacteria and more to your toothbrush. After each use, rinse the toothbrush with tap water and shake several times. Store upright to allow the toothbrush to air dry. Replace it every three months.



**6 SHARED PHONES.** Many cleaners are safe to use on electronic devices. Unplug or turn off the phone, then spray a cloth with all-purpose cleaner and wipe down the phone. Thoroughly clean the mouthpiece, the germiest part. Use a cotton swab dipped in isopropyl alcohol to clean the number buttons and the spaces between them.



**7 WASHERS AND DRYERS.** Because clothes are often laundered in cold or warm water and without bleach, germs can multiply in the washer. These germs are also transferred when clothes are moved into the dryer. To thoroughly clean the washer, start a warm wash cycle (with no clothes) and add 5 cups of white vinegar. Run the cycle as normal. Repeat every six months.



**8 THE REMOTE.** Often used but rarely cleaned, this object can be full of germs, especially if you have kids. Dilute all-purpose cleaner or white vinegar in warm water, then wet a soft cloth with the solution. Wipe the remote, then dry with another soft cloth.



**9 SHOWER CURTAINS.** Bacteria and germs breed on vinyl, cloth and other curtains, and the constant influx of hot water doesn't help. Spray down vinyl curtains regularly with a solution of equal parts white vinegar and warm water; wash cloth curtains according to label instructions at least once a month.



**10 THE VACUUM.** Vacuum brushes, bags and filters make great hiding places for germs like E. coli. Because food is sucked into the vacuum, bacteria can survive for a long time inside. Change the bags often, and remove the brushes and filters for a quick cleaning monthly. Clean the cavity of a bagless vacuum with all-purpose cleaner and let it air dry.

—AMY MAYFIELD

# Don't catch it!



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# Taste Test! Spring Teas

Six teas to swoon over this spring



1



2



3



4



5



6

## 1 VELVET GARDEN WHITE ROSE

Numi, [numitea.com](http://numitea.com)

\$7 for 18 bags

This delicate white tea, made from tender tea buds, is high in antioxidants and vitamin C. Its lovely pink hue and light, sweet scent complement its smooth flavor. Delicious with shortbread.

## 2 ORGANIC ALMOND BLOSSOM FLAVORED OOLONG

Frontier Natural Products Co-op, [frontiercoop.com](http://frontiercoop.com)

\$35 for 16 ounces loose tea (more than 300 cups)

Se Chung Chinese oolong tea is blended with small bits of sliced almonds for a slightly smoky, sweet flavor with just a hint of almond.

## 3 OOTHU GARDEN GREEN

Choice Organic Teas, [choiceorganict teas.com](http://choiceorganict teas.com)

\$5 for 16 bags

Grown in one of India's first organic tea gardens, lively, crisp Oothu Garden Green offers healthful polyphenols—which research shows protect against cancer and may fight high cholesterol and weight gain.

## 4 ORGANIC VANILLA HONEYBUSH HERBAL TEA

Stash, [stashtea.com](http://stashtea.com)

\$4 for 18 bags

This caffeine-free blend, enhanced with a touch of vanilla, is perfect to relax with before bed. The South African honeybush plant, a relative of rooibos, is named for its honey-scented flowers.

## 5 ORGANIC IRON GODDESS OOLONG

The Tea Spot, [theteaspot.com](http://theteaspot.com)

\$16 for 3 ounces loose tea (about 42 cups)

This tea is a new staff favorite thanks to its delicate jade color, natural sweetness and faint lilac scent. Hand-harvested in Fujian Province, China, this is one of the most revered varieties of oolong tea. The leaves can be re-steeped three times.

## 6 HOLY MATE!

Eco Teas, [ecoteas.com](http://ecoteas.com)

\$5 for 24 bags

Stimulating Holy Mate! combines energy-boosting yerba mate with antioxidant-rich tulsi (also known as holy basil) to provide a sustained energy lift—without the jitters—and a punch of disease resistance.



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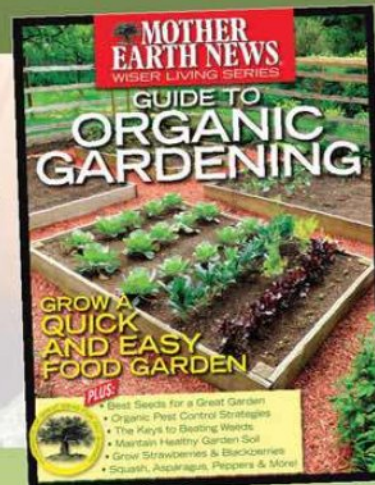
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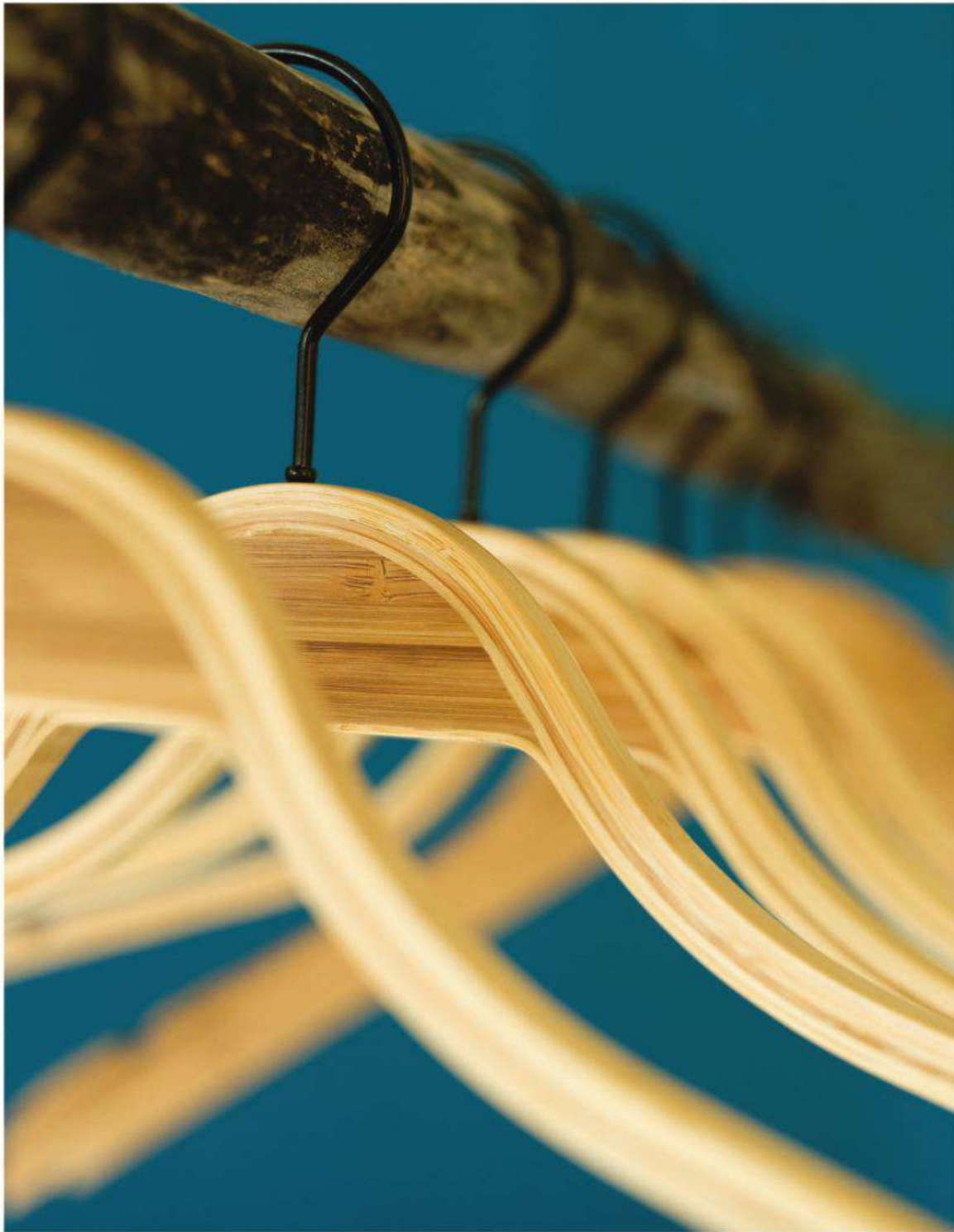


PHOTO BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

# Wardrobe Change

Use these easy tips to create breathing room in a crowded closet.

**WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR CLOSET DOOR**, what do you see? Are there piles of wrinkled clothes covering the floor, cramped hangers competing for space and seldom-worn attire taking up precious real estate? An overstuffed closet can lead to daily stress. Though it's often much easier to accumulate clothing than it is to let it go, with these helpful hints, you can carve out some coveted closet space.



**UN-CROWD, DE-CLUTTER**

First, simply pare down. Set aside half a day to go through your wardrobe ruthlessly, donating what no longer fits, what you haven't worn in a year or two, and what's out-dated. Take everything out of the closet and put it in piles to keep, donate or consign, trying on only the items you aren't sure about. (In the process, you'll likely discover at least one "treasure" you'll want to reclaim!)

Once you've whittled down your wardrobe, try this easy clutter-control practice. Put two containers in your closet: one for donation, one for consignment. As soon as you try on an item and decide it's no longer for you, place it directly into one of the boxes. When one fills, pop it in the car and drop it off at a charity or resale shop.

Once you've reduced your holdings, you'll be surprised at the amount of space you've freed up. Before you begin to reload, take this moment to sort everything by category—separate all shirts, pants, dresses, skirts and accessories into categories. Organize items according to color or by use, such as dress shirts and T-shirts. This system helps you see what you have. (If you still have more than your closet will bear, and if you have a climate-controlled attic or basement space, you can rotate out-of-season items.) To further streamline, remove as much as possible from the closet floor. A hanging shoe rack helps get shoes up and in sight. The same goes for ties, belts, scarves and hats. As you organize your wardrobe, it'll be easier—and obvious—to see what you have, what you may need and which items to chuck.

— WANDA URBANSKA

**Fancier Hangers**

Make basic wire hangers sturdier and more attractive by wrapping them in reused fabric.

**TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

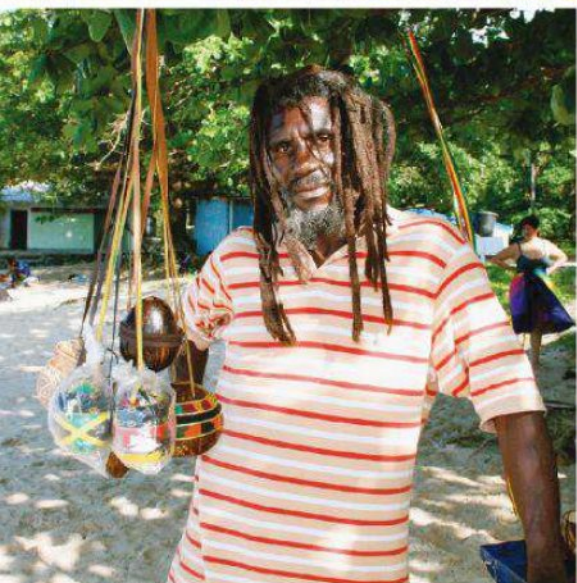
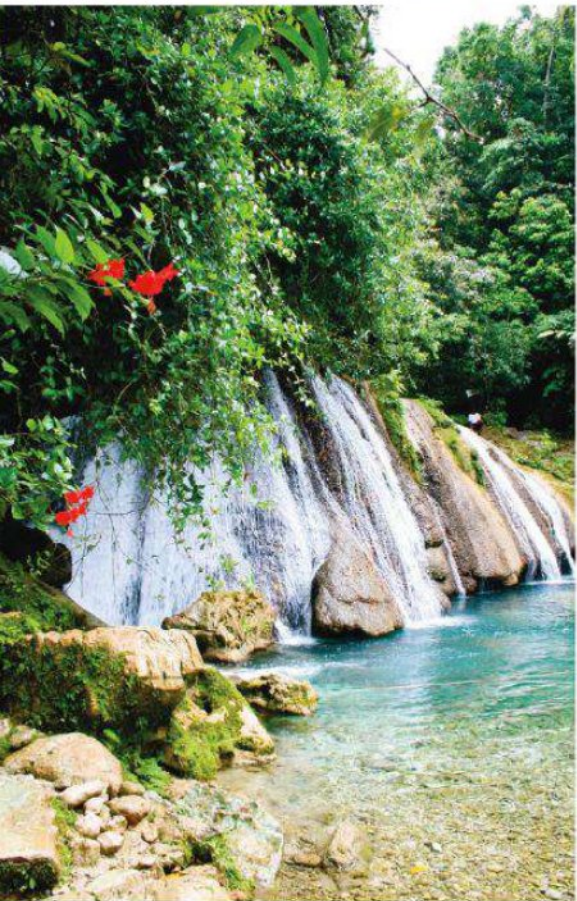
Several used men's cotton shirts  
Fabric scissors  
Wire hangers  
Fabric glue  
Reused ribbon, optional

**HOW-TO**

1. Cut four 2-inch-wide strips of fabric from the old shirts.
2. Take hanger and one strip of fabric. Place a dot of glue on one end of the fabric and, beginning at the tip of the hanger handle, wind it tightly around the tip of the hanger twice.
3. Wrap the whole handle by winding the fabric, overlapping each time.
4. Keep winding the fabric around the entire hanger. When you reach the end of the first fabric piece, glue the end to the wire. Take another fabric piece, glue the end to where you left off, and continue winding the fabric until you get back to the base of the handle.
5. Place a dot of glue on the end of the piece, and wind it around the finish. For a little added charm, you can use about 6 inches of reused ribbon to tie a bow at the base of the handle.

— Reprinted with permission from  
Eco-Chic Home by Emily Anderson,  
[skipstonebooks.org](http://skipstonebooks.org).







# Jamaican Hideaway

Relax off the beaten path in a locally owned hotel near stunning waterfalls, plantation ruins and one of Jamaica's only publicly owned beaches.

**TOO MANY OVERDEVELOPED** Caribbean destinations have lost their quirky charm, but eastern Jamaica's lightly touristed Portland parish remains a place where colorful fruit stands line the roads, fishermen unload the day's catch from rickety boats, and ladies parade to church in brilliant hats.

Located amid the region's pristine Blue Mountains and golden beaches is Hotel Mocking Bird Hill, a 10-room hideaway above the town of Port Antonio. Overlooking glorious aquamarine waters and just a quick shuttle ride to Frenchman's Cove beach, this lush getaway lets you savor an authentic Jamaica that cruise-shippers might only glimpse.

## EXPLORE AND UNWIND

Every room at solar-powered Mocking Bird Hill opens onto 6.5 acres of organic tropical gardens (a bird watcher's paradise) and is naturally cooled by sea breezes. You can watch the sun set behind the mountains from the rooftop observatory and fall asleep to tree frogs chirping their moonlight sonatas.

Hotel owners Shireen Aga and Barbara Walker pamper guests with natural spa treatments, Jamaican cooking classes, a chlorine-free pool and enticing hammocks. And they're committed to using the island's abundance of local resources. Nearly every meal—such as fresh mango scones or goat-cheese ravioli with callaloo (Jamaican greens)—is made of ingredients from family farms within 100 miles.

Hotel Mocking Bird Hill encourages guests to engage in local tourism ventures that provide jobs in a region rich in natural and human resources, but poor in cash. Here are some of the staff's favorite spots:

**Winnifred Beach:** One of the island's few publicly owned community beaches where visitors and locals swim without a fee. Lick 'Em Finger outdoor restaurant serves excellent grilled meats and seafood; it's run by Cynthia Miller, a Winnifred Beach preservation leader.

**Charles Town Maroons:** At a thatched-hut museum and cultural center in the Blue Mountains, descendants of the Maroons—escaped slaves who organized guerilla rebellions against the British in the 1700s—preserve their Afro-Caribbean traditions. Don't miss a drumming/dancing performance or an inspiring oral-history hike to coffee-plantation ruins, led by Maroon "colonel" Frank Lumsden.

**Reach Falls:** Natural cascading waterfalls and freshwater pools greet you at this jungle park. For an adventure, hike up the river to the falls with a guide.

**Blue Mountain Coffee:** Bike or hike along steep but scenic hills to this sustainable coffee estate.

**Bamboo rafting:** Float on Jamaica's Rio Grande river aboard a bamboo raft captained by a local who poles guests downstream.

## Island Ease

Hotel Mocking Bird Hill offers luxury, not wastefulness. Its eco-attributes include:

- Solar hot water (100 percent) and solar electricity (65 percent)
- Organic, locally sourced foods
- Insecticide- and pesticide-free gardens that attract more than 60 bird species
- Water-saving showers and faucets
- Rainwater harvesting
- Anaerobic wastewater treatment (removes impurities so water can be reused in the gardens)
- Support of a Jamaican reforestation program
- Stationery, greeting cards and gifts from local women's craft co-ops
- Chlorine- and phosphate-free laundry
- All-local staff

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sherene's Place sells snacks in Charles Town. Visitors at Hotel Mocking Bird Hill can board a bamboo raft for a guided tour down nearby Rio Grande River. The hotel's 6.5 acres of organic tropical gardens attract more than 60 bird species. I-Cliff, a Rastafarian, sells his handmade crafts at Winnifred Beach. Reach Falls provides a picturesque hiking and swimming destination.

PHOTOS BY LAUREL KALLENBACH

## Learn more

[hotelmockingbirdhill.com](http://hotelmockingbirdhill.com)

— LAUREL KALLENBACH



# A Vinegar Pickle

I use white vinegar as a natural cleaning product, but until recently I never asked how it was made or where it came from. When I finally did ask, I learned that some white vinegar may be produced from fermenting ethanol from natural gas or petroleum derivatives. If this is true, how can we be sure our vinegar is “natural”?

— WHITNEY

**WHITE VINEGAR**, in its elegant simplicity, is one of the multi-purpose wonders of the world. It can be used to clean, disinfect, deodorize, remove stains, shine and polish. You can use it in the laundry, as hair conditioner or to make a fine vinaigrette.

Vinegar is the result of a process called fermentation, where a concert of yeast and bacteria turns sugar into acetic acid. The yeast starts by converting sugars into alcohol, or more specifically ethyl alcohol. The bacteria then ferment the ethanol into acetic acid, the key ingredient in vinegar.



Don't put petroleum byproducts in your salad dressing. Vinegars that list “grain alcohol” are made with natural ingredients. PHOTO BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

Ethanol is crucial to the process and it can come from natural sources such as fermented juice, cider, wine or beer. But ethanol can also be made synthetically from natural gas and petroleum. “U.S. refineries produce between 19 and 21 gallons of motor gasoline from one barrel (42 gallons) of crude oil. The remainder of the barrel yields distillate and residual fuel oils, jet fuel, and many other products,” says the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Quite the vinegar pickle, if you consider the impacts our use of petroleum products have on air, surface and ground water, local ecosystems, and, dare I say, climate change. Not to mention the concerns people like you rightly have about the safety of putting a petroleum-based product into food.

While the FDA doesn't think using synthetic ethanol in vinegar or any other food substance is a good idea, regulations currently do not restrict its use. At least the FDA does have this policy against misleading labeling: “Synthetic ethyl alcohol may be used as a food ingredient or in the manufacturing of vinegar or other chemicals for food use, within limitations ... Any labeling reference to synthetic alcohol as ‘grain alcohol’ or ‘neutral grain spirits’ is considered false and misleading.”

If the ingredient label on your vinegar says “grain alcohol,” or “neutral grain spirits,” or “wine,” you'll know the vinegar was made with things like corn, apples or grapes. Of course, it's unclear how strenuously the FDA enforces that policy. But it is on the books and should help protect us from purchasing vinegar made with synthetic spirits.

So look for grain alcohol or neutral grain spirits in the ingredients. I have yet to see synthetic alcohol on a label. If you see it, that would be a vinegar to avoid. Still concerned about your vinegar even though synthetic alcohol isn't on the label? Call that particular vinegar company and ask them straight up.

Now, if you want to be absolutely certain what's in your vinegar, the best way is to make it yourself. You can find an old-school recipe at [naturalhomemagazine.com/homemade-vinegar](http://naturalhomemagazine.com/homemade-vinegar).

Umbra Fisk is an advice columnist character created by *Grist* online magazine. For more environmental news, humor and inspiration, visit [grist.org](http://grist.org).





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SEE ARTICLE, PAGE 18

Oasis Design  
oasisdesign.net/greywater

Greywater Action  
greywateraction.org

Water Conservation  
Alliance of Southern  
Arizona  
watercasa.org

World Health Organiza-  
tion's guidelines for safe  
use of wastewater:  
who.int/water\_sanitation\_  
health/wastewater/  
gsuweg4/en/index.html

How to Implement a  
Graywater System for  
Your Garden (video)  
youtube.com/  
watch?v=t1DfNlxk-A

Rainwater Harvesting  
expert Brad Lancaster  
on Greywater  
harvestingrainwater.com/  
greywater-harvesting

SustainableSources.com  
greywater.sustainable  
sources.com

## FURTHER READING

Create an Oasis with  
Greywater: Choosing,  
Building, and Using  
Greywater Systems  
by Art Ludwig



## SMALL-SPACE GARDENING RESOURCES

SEE ARTICLE, PAGE 20

## ORGANIC PLANT FOOD

EcoOrganics  
ecoorganics.com

Espoma  
espoma.com

Organicare  
organicareusa.com

Terracycle  
terracycle.net

## ORGANIC PEST CONTROL

Eartheasy  
eartheasy.com  
list of homemade solutions

EcoSmart  
ecosmart.com  
pest control and garden  
fungicide made with  
essential oils

Monterey Lawn  
and Garden  
montereylawngarden.com  
organic garden pest controls

Planting Containers  
(see "Let It Grow," page 28)

SEEDS  
Burpee  
burpee.com

Heirloom Seeds  
heirloomseeds.com

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johnnyseeds.com

Seeds of Change  
seedsofchange.com

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## WINERY RESOURCES

SEE ARTICLE, PAGE 60

DeLoach Vineyards  
deloachvineyards.com  
certified biodynamic  
and organic wines

Biodynamic Gardening  
By Hilary Wright  
naturalhomemagazine.  
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aspx?itemnumber=4293  
history of biodynamic  
gardening

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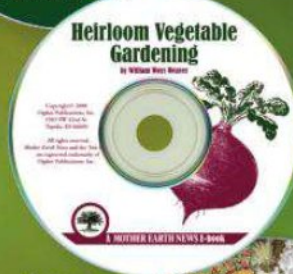
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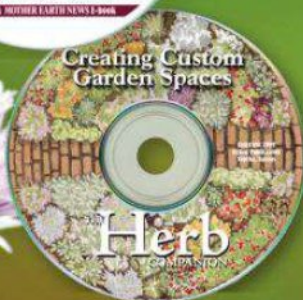
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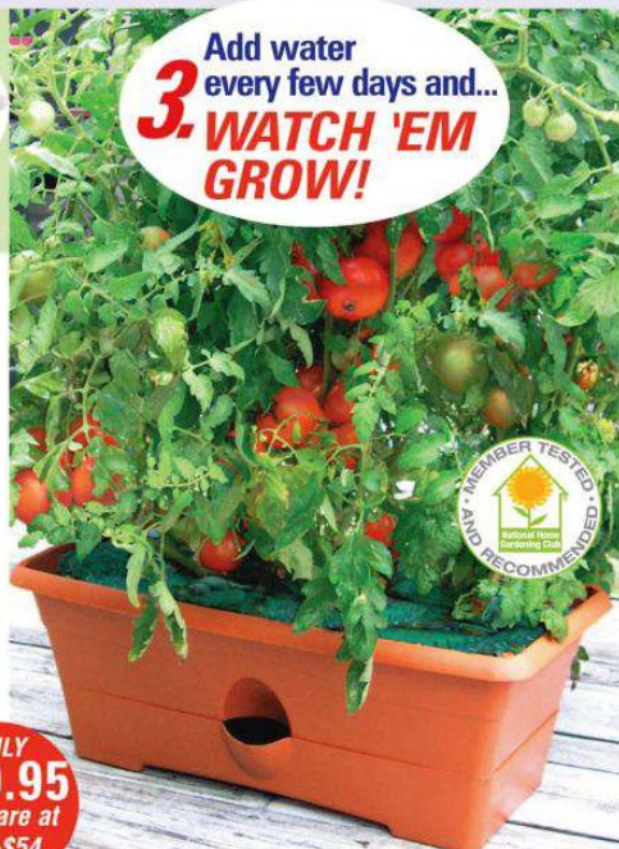


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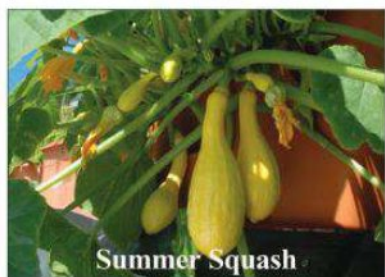
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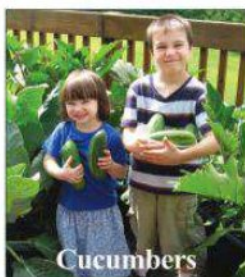
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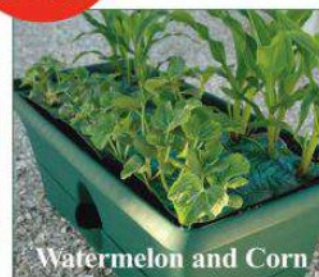
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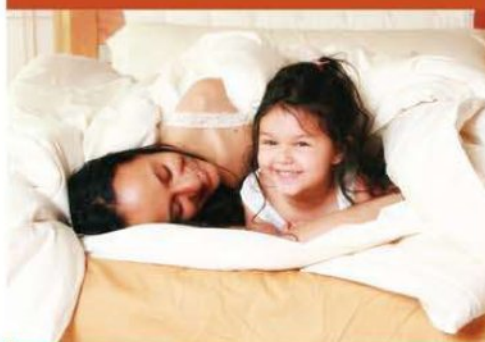
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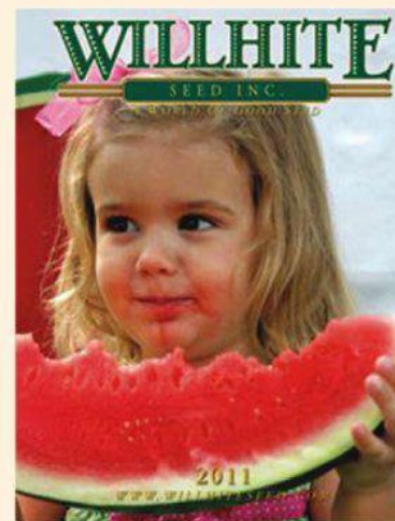
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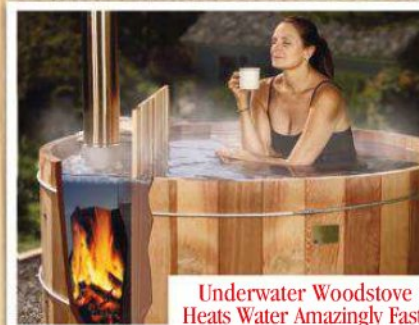
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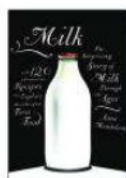
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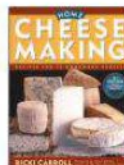


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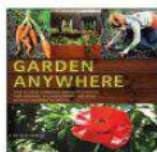
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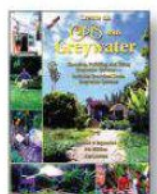


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